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# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

VOLUME XV

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## CHANDANI\*

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

YOU KNOW WHAT A to-do there was that day. I had almost gone under, with never a warning of the leak down below. I had felt my head neither ache nor reel, nor was there any pain anywhere in the body or gripes in the stomach. King Yama's minions were conspiring in whispers behind closed doors. Never had they got such an opportunity, for the doctors were all ninety miles away in Calcutta. That is how things stood that day.

It was nearly evening. I was sitting on the verandah. The sky darkened. It looked as if it would rain soon. My courtiers said, "Grandad, we have heard you once used to make up stories as you told them. Why don't you tell us any now?"

I very nearly said, "Because my powers have ebbed."

But just then one cleverer than the rest rapped out her words, "You can't, any longer, can you?" This was hard to put up with. It was like a prod on the elephant's head. I knew there was no getting away from it now. I said, "It's not that I can't—I can. But then....."

I stopped. My mind was already summoning stories from Rajputana. I coughed a little.

"Wait a minute... Isn't that someone come to see me? I'll just go and see," I said, trying to escape. But no one had come. I had to sit down to it, after all.

Yama's minions are stupid as a rule. They can hardly move without bumping and bouncing, and making their spears and spikes and knives and daggers clang ever so noisily. But not a sound did they make that day.

\* Translated from the original Bengali story of the same name, included in *Galpa-Salpa* ( May, 1941 ), a book of children's stories which was one of the very last writings of the poet. See *Stories from Galpa-Salpa, Vistra-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. XI Part III.

It was evening. The traveller creaked along in a bullock-cart. He would reach Rajmahal next morning, and take a boat and go westward. He was Arijit Singh, a Rajput, commander of the army of a petty king in Bengal. He was on leave, and on his way to Rajputana. Night was coming on. Arijit had fallen asleep, sitting, in the cart. All of a sudden, he woke up to find the cart lumbering along through a forest. He asked the driver why he had come this way instead of taking him to the river ghat.

"You will know why, when you know who I am," said the carter.

His *pugree* was worn aslant. The moment he put it straight, Arijit said, "Yes, I know you now. You are one of the creatures of the robber-chief Parakram Singh. I fell into your hands several times before, but managed to escape."

"You are right," said he, "but you are not escaping this time. Come with me to my master."

"Well," said Arijit, "I'll come if I must. But you won't get what you want."

The cart continued through the forest. And now I shall tell you what had gone before.

Arijit was a prince. When the Mughal Emperor robbed him of his kingdom, he fled to Bengal. His vow was to equip himself there to win back his lost heritage. Parakram Singh, too, had lost his all at the hands of the Mughals, and had got up a band of robbers. His daughter was of marriageable age, and he was keen on Arijit marrying her. But his caste was not as high as Arijit's, who was opposed to marrying beneath himself.

It was nearly dawn. When Arijit was brought before him Parakram said, "You've come at the right time. It's only two days more to the auspicious hour for the marriage. Your bridegroom's dress is all ready."

"Don't be unjust," said Arijit, "every one knows you have a Muslim streak in your family."

"Maybe that is true," said Parakram, "and that is the very reason why I have been trying so long to purify our family strain by mixing it with the blood of one so high-born as you. This is my opportunity, at last. But I don't intend to humiliate you. I shall not keep you a prisoner—you may move about freely. But remember, no one has the slightest chance of escaping from this forest, if he doesn't know the way out. Do whatever else you like, but don't try to escape, for you won't succeed."

The night was far advanced. Arijit could not sleep ; he had come out and was sitting under a banyan on the bank of the Kasini. To him came, at that hour, a girl with her face veiled, and said, "My salutations to you ! I am the daughter of the bandit-chief. My name is Rangan Kumari, but everybody calls me Chandani. My father has long been wanting to marry me to you. I am told you are unwilling. You must tell me why. Do you consider me untouchable ?"

"No woman is ever untouchable, the sastras say," replied Arijit.

"Is it, then, that you think I am ugly ?"

"It's not that, either, for your reputation for beauty has travelled far."

"Then why don't you agree ?"

"I'll frankly tell you the reason," said Arijit. "Princess Nirmal Kumari of Karanjor is a distant relation of mine. We were playmates as boy and girl. She is in peril. The Muslim Nawab had sent his emissary to her father to demand her hand. The father did not agree ; so they are now at war. I am determined to rescue her, and have sworn not to marry before I succeed. Karanjor is a small kingdom, and the king's resources are poor. The fight cannot last long, and I must reach Karanjor before it is over. I was on my way there, when your father stopped me. I don't know what to do now."

"Don't worry," said the girl, "nothing shall prevent your escape from here. I know the way out, and I shall lead you out

of the forest this very night and let you go. You must not mind if I blind-fold you, for the presiding deity of this forest, the goddess Chandeswari, has forbidden that any outsider should get to know its secret way out. Besides, I shall put chains on your hands ; why, you will know as we proceed."

Blind-folded and hand-cuffed Arijit followed Chandani through the dense forest. The whole robber-gang lay insensible that night—in the stupor of *bhang*. Only the watchman on duty was awake.

"Where are you going, Chandani ?" he asked.

"To the temple."

"And who may that prisoner be ?"

"A foreigner. I will sacrifice him before the goddess. Let us pass."

"Why are you all alone ?"

"Such is the goddess's pleasure. No one else must come with me."

When they reached the edge of the forest, it was nearly dawn. Chandani bowed at Arijit's feet and said, "You have nothing more to fear. Here is my bangle, take it ; you may find it of some use, in case of need, on the way."

And so Arijit set out on his long journey. The days went by as he overcame one obstacle after another, and he was afraid he would not reach in time. When at last, after many hardships, he came near Karanjor, he learned that the situation was desperate. The fort could not be held much longer ; there was no doubt that in a day or two the Muslims would take it. Arijit rode his horse hard, day and night, without sleep, without food. As he came near the fort he saw it was in flames. He knew what that meant. The women had taken the *jabar* vow. Defeat had come, and so they had lighted the funeral pyre. They would throw themselves on it and burn to death, rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. When Arijit managed, somehow, to enter the fort, all was over. The men had fought to the last—the women were all

dead. Nirmalkumari was saved indeed,—but, alas, she was saved by death, not by him.

Then he remembered that Chandani had said, “When your work is done, it is here you will have to return. I will wait for your coming, though it be long.”

A couple of months went by. When Arijit returned to the forest, it was the moonlit half of the month of *Phalgun*. To the blowing of conches and the strains of the *sawai*, with everyone wearing a new crimson *angree* on his head and a saffron scarf over his dress, at the auspicious hour, Chandani was married to Arijit.

Here ended my story. And then I went in, as was my habit, and sat in the arm-chair in my bedroom. A damp wind was blowing; it was about to rain. Sudhakanta came to see if the doors and windows were properly closed. He found me sitting in my chair. He called—there was no reply. He touched me and said, “There’s a chill wind blowing. Come to bed, sir.”

Still there was no response..... The next sixty-four hours passed in complete unconsciousness.\*

\* The reference is to the pret's own serious illness in Sept. 1937, following an attack of erysipelas.



## THE ART OF GAGANENDRANATH TAGORE

*By* BENODEBEHARI MUKHERJEE

IN THE art history of contemporary India, the name of Gaganendranath has been linked up with that of his younger brother, Abanindranath. Many of our contemporary art critics have taken it for granted that Gaganendranath is a leader and exponent of the Tagore School. It is true that Gaganendranath is one of the most important creative forces in the field of modern art and had deeply influenced the younger disciples of Abanindranath. He also took an active part in organising the Indian Society of Oriental Art. Granting all these, Gaganendranath cannot yet be called a revivalist like his brother, Abanindranath. Neither can he be categorised with any particular group, nor does he belong to any form of school, old or new,—even Tagore School cannot call him its own. Gaganendranath is a solitary figure in our modern art world. He never followed any particular beaten track. He was nobody's disciple, and he never tried to form any school, or build up a following.

A great amateur, (in the sense in which many great Chinese masters are amateurs) free from all academic bias, his only guide his inborn refined taste, and an energetic creative mind, Gaganendranath's artistic life was full of new ventures and abrupt changes.

In the early days of the national movement in Bengal he took a keen interest in reviving cottage industries ; to him the problem was related more to the artistic life of India than to its economic life. He was the first individual who tried to introduce village crafts of everyday use in our modern life. It was he who tried to introduce an aesthetic atmosphere into our homes. It is true that many of his attempts in this line

remained out of the reach of the ordinary man. Yet some of his contributions, especially those relating to furniture-designing and stage-craft, have left a lasting mark. This short introduction to Gaganendranath's artistic career will go to show that paintings, which brought him fame and popularity, were not his only media of expression, although they formed the most important part of his artistic genius. His paintings come first in the order of priority ; it was through this conventional medium that Gaganendranath, the innovator, tried fully to express himself.

Gaganendranath's genius took a new turn after he came into contact with two visiting painters of modern Japan, Yokohama Taikan, and more particularly Kampoo Arai. Initiated by them, he took up brush-and-ink work with all the seriousness of a great amateur. From then onward he remained a painter in the full sense of the term. Although in his later years, ink was replaced by colour, he never put his brush aside for the sake of new adventures in the field of art. One thing needs being mentioned here. Though he took up Japanese brush-and-ink, Gaganendranath never cared to learn that highly developed ( almost sophisticated ) technicality of Japanese brush work.

The new material was only a new impetus. He was fascinated by the apparent ease and the inherent refinement of ink-work. But his inventive mind was much too active to remain contented with this new material only. He wanted to create something new, something which would satisfy his creative urge. And when we look at his work in the so-called Japanese style ( which really is not Japanese ) we cannot say that Gaganendranath had over-estimated his powers. There are innumerable pictures of Gaganendranath in the pseudo-Japanese style. But, like all creative minds, he had the unique capacity for creating and then destroying what he created. What remains, however of his paintings of this period is not inconsiderable numerically. Among all those paintings of birds,

landscapes, portraits etc., the most outstanding is the series of about 20 pictures on the life of Sri Chaitanya and illustrations for Rabindranath's *Jiban-Smriti*.

Though Gaganendranath's achievement in this particular line was really great, his popularity lay in quite another field. He is better known and remembered today for his small-size landscapes. As a landscape painter, the artist Gaganendranath has expressed himself, more or less, in the same way as many of his contemporaries. Perhaps this is the reason why his name is associated with the New-Bengal School. In his landscapes Gaganendranath's attitude was more romantic. Nature to him was a kind of mild stimulant. He took nature at its face value and never tried to penetrate and go deep into the mysteries of that world of elements like the Chinese ; nor did he, like some European landscapists, try to catch the dramatic side of nature. To him it was just a vision and the memory of a beautiful thing. To him the structural and dimensional nature was an anathema. His pictures of low flat fields, river banks, and mountain peaks, are all far and away from us ; one looks at them and then passes on. Rarely is there in Gaganendranath's landscapes a place to dwell in, a tree to sit under, or a rock to lean on. Nevertheless, we enjoy the atmosphere of his landscapes ; never depicted in too strong a line or too vivid a colour, they are always soft and mild. They are refreshing, if not vitalizing.

Gaganendranath's inventive talent and his creative genius took another abrupt and daring turn. This change came during the period about 1920-1928. Students of our cultural history know that the period 1920-1928 was a crucial one. In Bengali literature a new movement was initiated about this time and in art a new outlook was perceivable. Rabindranath's poetry and Abanindranath's painting were both heading towards a new direction. It was about this time that our literature and art were trying to take on a more plastic quality and become more structural in form. In this period of transition Gaganendranath spear-headed many of the modern tendencies. The land-

scape painter changed his role and appeared before us as a cubist artist.

Any casual student of modern European art history knows what cubism is. Still I must, perhaps, say something about cubism so that my readers may refresh their memory. There is much misunderstanding about Gaganendranath's cubism. To understand and evaluate Gaganendranath's later work, which is popularly known as cubistic, one must have a very clear idea of European cubism, its significance and its contributions in the field of modern Western art.

According to European exponents of this new ( though now old, and, as a form of plastic language, obsolete ) school, cubism is not a naturalistic language ; it does not try to imitate visual form. The cubists try to construct a form, which is the outcome of analytical knowledge and which is not based on optical impression or observation. Now, let us see what these cubists found through their process of analysis. To them this visual nature is just a combination of cubes. Thus to the cubist artist a tree is nothing but a collection of cubes, so is the head of a woman, a dog, or a mandolin. The European cubist artists tried to construct a form with the help of these cubic units. In the process, the cubist painting looks like a pattern. We may not recognise the painted object in a cubist painting, but if we are trained in that line we can analyse the picture and fathom the intellectual process or see the mind of the artist working behind the finished product. If I am permitted to make the statement, I may say that cubism is a kind of grammar of plastic language and the cubist artist is more concerned with the grammar of art than with its expressive side.

Now let us see what reactions were produced by this grammar of art upon Gaganendranath's creative mind. It is obvious from his early cubistic work that unlike the European cubists his attitude was not analytical. He was more concerned with the curious pattern-like appearance of cubistic creation. In his early attempts Gaganendranath did imitate this pattern-like

quality. But his purpose was quite different from that of the European exponents. What he tried to produce was not a formal pattern but a chequered play of light and shadow, of heavy black with the sharp contrast of light. His cubism was more arabesque than dimensional object-drawing.

This period of pattern-weaving was cut short and a period of more colourful and more fantastic creations followed. This was the most fruitful period of Gaganendranath's artistic life. This period, which lasted till the end of the artist's life, was one of continuous development. Colour became more bright and luminous. The contrasting interplay of light and shade became a joyous colourful pattern. This pure experiment with light was a short-lived one, because very soon after Gaganendranath started introducing in his pictures figures, trees, animals and objects that were around him. These objects were true to nature in their appearance. There was no conscious attempt ( as in the case of European cubists ) at reshaping the visual experience through intellectual understanding. And yet, on the other hand, the colour patterns remained free from all visual association ; it was like the light that 'never was on sea or land'. That is why in his painting the world of objects lost its glaring reality through the effect of light and colour. His pictures gave the kind of impression that we get when we look at a particular scene through a prism. This prismatic coloration brought a new kind of sensation, a new approach to the world of reality. The whole picture became a play of colour and the objects a kind of motive whose purpose was to support or to hold or to check the movement of the colour pattern. Now with this combination of reality and vision his pictures took a strange form. The natural and the super-natural joined hands. This fusion was of his own doing and not borrowed from cubism. Only the pattern-like quality of cubism lingered. If we leave aside the structural form of his pictures and try to grasp their inner spirit we shall then be able better to understand the originality of the man. This strong feeling that

we derive from Gaganendranath's so-called cubistic art is something which was unknown to cubism and which he had never seen in that form of art. It was an irony that, among his contemporaries in India, he was labelled as an Indian cubist. What he achieved in his more mature work was something unique.

Before I conclude this note on Gaganendranath, I shall try to compare him with another school of modern European art, the Surrealist School. In the work of surrealist painters we seem to tread upon a no-man's land, a region which lies on the border line of the real and the unreal, where that fusion of the real and the unreal is elusive and yet apparent. The surrealist artists of Europe, are a kind of dream-photographers. They tried to record the world of dreams with the help of symbols, which are mostly derived ( particularly in the early stage of surrealism ) from the writings of the great psychologist, Sigmund Freud. The surrealist painters always try to impart some psychological message through their colour and form. Their dreamland pictures spring, as the psychologist would say, from the depths of the sub-conscious. In their attempt to record the world of the sub-conscious, their paintings become a conglomeration of unrelated objects which are realistic in appearance. They appear real, but the situation in which these objects appear juxtaposed to one another is not possible in the normal circumstances of our waking life, and in this sense they are unreal. What appears as unreal and irrelevant to an onlooker of a surrealist painting is, however, absolutely relevant to one who sees it from a psychologist's point of view. In short, surrealist art is a kind of speculative art where they rely more on analytical knowledge and on the sense of things than on what they appear to be. Now let us see whether Gaganendranath's paintings have any affinity with the work of the surrealists.

In Gaganendranath's paintings the fusion of the real and the unreal was not the result of a conscious intellectual process nor were his paintings symbolic. There was no attempt on his

part to bring forward any psychological message. There is just his fancy amusing itself with the visual world as seen through the colour of his rich imagination. It is as engrossing and quite as amusing as a fairly tale. The best work of this period can be likened to a wonderland. The path that leads us to the fairy regions is easy and familiar from the tales we had heard on our grandma's knees. But once we are in the fairy-land itself it rouses within us a feeling which it is difficult to express in words.

## THE SCIENCE OF SYMBOLS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF HINDU RELIGIOUS ART

*By* ALAIN DANIELOU

ANANDA COOMARASWAMI once wrote that Indian Art imitates Nature not so much in its external forms as in its mode of operation. This may not be true of Indian Art in its entirety, but certainly corresponds to the basic conception of Hindu religious art. The outlook through which the artist tries to re-create a world similar to the natural world, is known as the cosmological view of Art. Hindu philosophy considers that a question can be studied from a number of points of view ; each point of view having its own limitations and leading to distinct results. Among these the naturalistic ( Vaiśeṣika ), the cosmological ( Sāṃkhya ), the logical ( Nyāya ) approaches, and the approach through identification ( Yoga ) are considered more important. These ways of approach are found at the basis of artistic creation as well as of all other human activities. The Naturalistic approach studies its object on the basis of the data of sensorial experience. Most of modern science comes therefore within the definition of the Vaiśeṣika, as well as all forms of imitative art. The word Vaiśeṣika itself means "the science of the particular". The cosmological approach on the other hand tries to re-create, starting from its basic elements, an object similar to that of its study, thus allowing us to understand the process of its generation. The logical approach, in connection with arts, is mainly concerned with the relation of medium and technique ; but the approach through identification is given great prominence in religious art, since it is only after the artist has realised the subtle shape of a deity through inner concentration that he may



be able to transpose the essential characteristics of its shape in terms of visible form and colour.

Western art, even when abstract, is almost exclusively naturalistic. When it gets away from realism it does not become analytical. It may reproduce the fantasies of an inadequate perception, such as may be created by dreams or deficient vision, but it cares little for basic laws of number and geometrical figures envisaged as the root of natural forms, as well as that of aesthetic emotion. An exception has to be made however as regards a few Primitive and Renaissance painters, the main one being Leonardo da Vinci, who showed a definite effort towards the Cosmological conception of art. And this effort, although it remained merely an attempt, gave very valuable results. This may explain why the only Western works of art which convey something similar to the subtle, undefinable, expression of Hindu medieval sculpture are a few paintings of Vinci and even, though to a lesser degree, of Raphael.

Indian Art, on the other hand, even when it imitates Nature, closely aims at creating again rather than merely translating. The modern like the ancient Indian painter tends towards creating an ideal type rather than reproducing exactly a particular likeness. He rather depicts a country and its atmosphere than a particular tree or landscape. This conception does not bring painting into competition with photography as the Western conception does. Photography very much disrupted European painting since it took away the value of one of its main assets which was a good likeness. The resulting loss of balance led to the development of impressionist, and later of surrealist, tendencies.

Hindu Medieval sculpture represents a very thorough attempt to make of the cosmological approach the very principle of art. It was remarkably successful in its application, and the great mass of sculptures produced from the 9th to the 12th century all over India seem to have followed very strictly and in minute detail the canons of theoretical proportions.

A geometrical diagram which represented the yantra, that is the mathematical expression of the divine aspect envisaged, was first drawn upon the stone and made 'alive' through a process of consecration. The image thus had to be inscribed within its limits. Further all the proportions of the image itself, varying according to the symbolic aspect envisaged, were regulated in minute details, including the breadth and length of the figures' and toes' phalanges, the size of eyelids and even that of nostrils. These detailed canons are still available today.

It might be thought that too elaborate rules would have paralysed the inspiration of the artist, create stiff unnatural forms. On the contrary they seemed to generate an ideal, angelic beauty, remarkably alive and subtle in expression. In many instances the medieval artist succeeded in his avowed aim which was to reveal a celestial beauty of which the greatest beauty found in human beings would seem but a pale unfinished copy ; for beauty is divided amongst individual beings, each of whom owns but a fragment of it, while all beauty can be concentrated in the ideal type built through a theoretical process.

Canons are a mere abstraction, a play of numbers. We could make canons for multidimensional worlds which we cannot visualize. It is therefore logical to conceive that forms built according to certain canons may have a power of suggestion beyond their actual appearance. This may explain the strange life which emanates from Medieval sculpture and architecture.

Hindu religious art is symbolic. Its aim is to convey to our minds the perception of something that transcends mere appearance. Just as a word becomes symbolic when it is used to express something beyond its factual meaning, something which words often cannot directly express, so also a sculpture is symbolic when it is used to represent something beyond the form it actually represents. In its essence all art is symbolic, because, the fact that the mere form or colour can be a source of enjoyment implies that this form or colour represents some-

thing which is independent of its use. All form that can arouse an aesthetic emotion is in fact a symbol.

In the Hindu view of art a symbol is not a conventional shape used to represent an abstraction; a true symbol is a reality. When the laws which rule the inner nature of things appear more transparently in a certain form, this form is taken as a symbol. Hence a symbol (*pratīka*) is defined as a 'limit' (*nīdāna*). It is a form which belongs to two orders of things which is the intersection of two worlds. According to this definition a straight line would be the symbol of a plane for the two dimensional beings who would live in another plane, since a straight line is the limit, the intersection of both. Thus we may discover that what we perceive of an object may not be its whole nature. It may be the section which pertains to the world in which we live. The very same object may have further prolongments in other worlds which we cannot see, although we may apprehend something of their nature through the peculiarities of form and the behaviour of the sections which pertain to both worlds, and which are for us the limits, the true symbols.

In music for example it is obvious that a major chord is joyful and a minor chord melancholy. Yet the physicist will tell us that there is between them only a difference of ratio, a mere matter of numbers. The third in one case being  $5/4$  and in the other  $6/5$ . How is it that a ratio of the form  $5/2^2$  should be joyful and a ratio of the  $2 \times 3/5$  should appear melancholy? We discover here a typical symbol, a link between two orders of things. And we shall see that these particular numerical relations have constant applications in architecture, sculpture, painting, medicine, sociology, astronomy and all other sciences.

In the same way at the limit of life we can observe geometrical patterns which are the expression of the reality of universal symbols. Thus crystals will show regular forms based on even numbers while most flowers have odd numbers of petals. But it was not the mere observation of such facts which led the ancient seers of India to adopt flowers, conches, sounds

and geometrical figures as symbols. It was rather the knowledge of the general laws of which these forms and sounds are but an accidentally obvious expression. And just as these relations can allow the establishment of some correspondence between the world of forms and sounds and that of our emotions, they can also allow the establishment of contacts between this and other worlds.

Man is in himself a limit, a being in whom several worlds which have no common measure unite. Our mind is not bound by the same laws of space and time as our physical senses and their organs. Further, our inner Consciousness belongs to a stage of being different from the world of the mind. Man is therefore a typical symbol and certain parts of his body or certain of his actions where the different elements of his being are more particularly knit together are taken as particular symbols. Most of the peculiarities of Hindu iconography become easy to grasp when this principle is recognized. This can also help us to understand why the human act of love and the union from which life springs are given such a prominent place in religious symbolism.

Through works of Art we can have a clearer perception of the scheme of Nature which Art renders apparent while Nature tries to hide it. This is the purpose of the work of art and this is why, imperfect as it is when compared with the perfection of Nature, it can move us more than the sight of Nature itself, for it explains to us the beauty of Nature.

Modern critics dismiss most of religious symbolism as chiefly accidental and based on crude utilitarian worship. But this does not explain the relation of symbolic and aesthetic values nor the beauty of shapes akin to the human and yet quite distinct from anything that can be seen or touched, such as the ideal proportion of the limbs and the features of medieval sculptures, or still more the beauty of figures with many heads and arms or partly human and partly animal and vegetal : Kinnaras, Gandharvas, Kirtimukhas, Sārdūlas, etc. who crowd the walls of temples.

The science of symbols or "Science of limits", the "Nidāna Sāstra", is said to belong to the cosmological interpretation of the Knowledge Eternal, the Veda. It is considered an appendix of the "Knowledge of Metaphysical correspondences", the Atharva Veda. The basic texts of this Science seem to have been lost—as were those of most of the ancient Hindu technical sciences during the centuries of neglect which resulted from foreign domination. There are however still some traditional students of the Nidāna Sāstra among whom, in the beginning of this century, was Paṇḍit Madhusūdhana Ojha of Jaipur. Some of his disciples, particularly Paṇḍit Motilal Gauḍ, published in Hindi and Sanskrit important, though brief, studies regarding the Nidāna Sāstra.

This loss of the main texts of the Science of Symbols provoked a sharp decline in religious art and led to a marked degeneracy in the style and proportions of architecture and sculpture in India. Theoretically, inaccuracy in proportions not only hampers the beauty but destroys the religious, or magic, value of images and temples which should accurately represent the 'limit', if they are to be the doors through which we may reach other worlds. Sentimental imagery can in no way make up for this deficiency. In fact all sentimental religion is usually the last vestige of a decadent ritual, preceding a return to a rationalistic approach.

The principles of the Nidāna Sāstra found their application in several technical sciences and crafts. This is why it is from the treatises of Śilpa and Vāstu Sāstra and some technical chapters of the Purāṇas and Tantras, as well as from such works as the Nīṭisāra, the Bṛihat saṃhita, etc. that we may recover its main outline.

All the images of Hindu deities are built up as a group of conventional forms and attributes meant to represent one aspect or other of the Divine powers. These forms and attributes are always the same and constitute the elements, the words of the symbolic code or language. They can be grouped in many

different ways. The images which combine a greater number of distinct features are considered the main deities, while images which differ by a few attributes only are spoken of as minor deities or aspects of one deity.

To give an example, the 24 different icons of Viṣṇu ( the All-Pervader ) are differentiated by the position which the four different accessories ( conch, discus, mace and lotus ) can occupy in the four hands of the god. These aspects of Viṣṇu are then called ; Nārāyaṇa ( the Universal Abode ), Mādhava ( the Lord of Knowledge ), Govinda ( Rescuer of the Earth ), Trivikrama ( Conqueror of the Three worlds ), Śrīdhara ( Bearer of Fortune ), etc. These aspects are explained as follows :

The four hands represent the four stages of human development and the four aims of life ( *puruṣārtha* ), the relative predominance of which results in the division of human life into four periods, of human society into four castes, of human history into four ages. These four stages are also symbolically connected with the four directions of space and hence with the orientation of images and temples. The aspects of knowledge pertinent to these four aspects of human destiny are represented by the four Vedas.

In all images the Lotus is the tendency towards light, towards reintegration, the Sātvika or centripetal tendency which binds the world together. Hence it is taken to represent "that which rules the Earth", meaning both 'dominion' and 'Eternal Law' ( Dharma ) as well as 'true Knowledge' ( Jñāna ). It is connected with the Water element which surrounds the Earth and purify all things. The water-born lotus is the emblem of purity.

The Conch is the tendency towards inertia, obscuration, dissolution, the Tamas or centrifugal tendency through which the Universe tends to dissociate into nothingness. It is associated with the Ether element ( Ākāśa Tattva ) the causal stage in which all dissolves and which is perceived only through the spiral of sound.

The discus, 'Beauteous Sight' ( Sudarśana ), represents the third tendency, the Rajas or expanding tendency, born of the opposition of the two other tendencies it gives rise to the circular movement of planets. It is associated with the Fiery principle ( Tejas Tattva ) and thus with the subtle expanding part of I-ness origin of sensorial perception.

The mace is Existence, life, the 'principle of Vital Energy' ( Prāṇa Tattva ) associated with the Air element ( Vāyu Tattva ).

We can easily see how the relative position of these symbols of the life Energy and of the three tendencies which are the substratum of all existence in relation to the four hands that are the four aims of human life—Pleasure, Prosperity, Righteousness, and Final Liberation—can be taken to represent the different aspects of Viṣṇu, the All Pervading form of Divinity who, in each of the Great periods of the world's history, descends as an avatara to establish the law of righteousness and the way of knowledge suited to the conditions of a new age.

## THE HINDU TEMPLE

By HARIDAS MITRA

THERE IS AN EXTENSIVE LITERATURE on the building art of India both sacred and secular. The sacred building art again is inseparably connected with religious worship, is based on a philosophy and is the practical application of a ritual. Thus every school and system ultimately arrived at having its own codes based on tradition (paramparā). A proper understanding of the technique of the Indian building art therefore involves a study of its philosophy and ritual. The recent publication of Dr. Stella Kramrisch (*The Hindu Temple : Two Vols.*) contains this new approach to a proper appreciation of the building art of India. Dr. Kramrisch has an intense love for Indian art, possesses a rare artistic sense and combines with her great erudition and consummate skill in arriving at conclusions, an indefatigable industry for the mastery of facts. Her patient work of years has resulted in the production of two formidable volumes, thoroughly documented and supplemented by explanations to the accompanying plates. Few would be privileged to visit the ancient shrines. Fewer would know how difficult it is to comprehend, much less to interpret, the Vāstu-Sāstras, "the Canons of Architecture", and their connected rituals.

This masterly treatise contains a scientific and systematic treatment of all accessible materials on the subject. The author's analyses of the artistic elements of many a special work on sculpture will not be easily surpassed. The work is full of happy generalisations and deductions of principles out of a confusing mass of data. Some of the deductions are very original. But simple facts put in systematic and exact scientific way become very often too technical for the non-initiate. The two volumes,



too stiff to be a text book, will remain for years a most valued work of reference for the guidance of students and specialists.

A few salient features of the book may now be mentioned. Although the work is styled *The Hindu Temple* a few Jaina and Buddhist specimens have also been included among the illustrations. But this does not involve any contradiction. So far as we can judge from the ancient *Silpa* and *Vāstu Śāstras*, all Indian schools had some common traditional sources of inspiration and general building plan.

The author has judiciously excluded from her treatment the Further Indian and Insulindian temple types, as both of them are different developments of Indian architectural origins. French and Dutch savants have already given them fairly comprehensive treatments. For the South Indian temple types, Rama Raja's famous work certainly cannot be replaced. That is probably the reason why a detailed treatment of the Drāviḍa temple types has also been excluded. As for Khajuraho proper, the author and her technical collaborator have given good descriptions and photo illustrations of some beautiful specimens of statuary in her already published *Surasundari Portfolio*. Sir Lepel Griffin's rare book on *Central Indian Monuments* has magnificently reproduced the upper rows of the statuary of many temples in *auto-type sepia*.

The author's selection of the typical North Indian examples has been very judicious. There are many hundreds of likely examples to choose from. It is very difficult to discover the exact and the most representative ones from the perplexing mass unless great care and circumspection are exercised. Masterly and typical examples of North Indian temples are, no doubt, Nilakantheśvara, Ambaranātha, Kaṇḍārya and Lakṣaṇeśvara temples.

The two volumes of Dr. Kramrisch are divided into eight sections, the last two sections forming the most important and illuminative part of the work. There are besides five temple plans, two comparative tables of measurements, two *Sūtra-pāta* or curve plottings of *Sikharas*, as well as several figures of

Maṇḍalas and temple types in the text. These are followed by detailed explanations to the plates, eighty in number. In three chapters, texts of rare Vāstu-Sāstras have been given in Nāgarī transcription. The voluminous nature of the relevant literature that has been utilised has been clearly shown up by the "Sources". There is besides a useful and detailed Index.

The photographs by Mr. Raymond Burnier are mostly well reproduced. Some illustrations, however, do not do justice to the specimens. The definitions in the frontal views of the temples are not always satisfactory. Partial shadows in many of the photographs could have been eliminated. However, the illustrations of Śiva Tripurantaka, Liṅgodbhava, Ardhanariśvara, and Tara and of the busts and heads, besides, are excellent. The examples of Gaṇa, Vidyadhara, Apsaras, Śalabhañjika, Sūrasundarī and Mithuna figures are well chosen. The Bhūta or Preta figures are well reproduced and express the joy of emancipation from the toils of mortal cares. The Osia shrines and the Nilakaṇṭheśvara temple of Udaypur provide good illustrations. Decorative and architectural motifs such as Pūrṇakumbha, Latā, Hamsa, Kīrtrimukha, Simha, Makara and Mūṣaka feeding on sweets are good.

The author has consulted the available sources. The Vedic and Tantrik ritual books have been consulted. Of these sources, the *Isānaśivoguru-deva-paddhati* belongs to a very influential Śaivite school which originated in the North and spread to the South. Important texts on architecture (Nibandha) and handbooks mostly in manuscripts at present are due to them. The *Hayasīrṣa-Pañcarātra* is known in the North but the *Vaikhāṇasa-āgama* belongs to the South. Besides, copious use has been made by the author of the Vāstu-Sāstras, Purāṇas etc. The architectural origins have been traced and the classification of the different types of Indian architecture and temples are put on a systematic basis and in chronological order.

The learned author's interpretations are very successful regarding obscure texts on the types of latter (Curvature of the

Trunk, Gūṇḍi of the superstructures, Sikharas of temples ). The curve outline would vary, according as it is drawn through points of intersections of vertical and horizontal lines : by tri-guṇa, catur-guṇa, pañca guṇa, ṣaḍ-guṇa sūtras and become increasingly slender. This relationship may be thus put in mathematical terms. As the total vertical dimension, *unmāna* i. e. the height in each case is the summation of successive measures of divisions, rising in a geometrically progressive series, the initial measurement—Module, starting from the base may be easily determined. The total height in each case is the same and is equal to the Module multiplied by the summation of a Geometrical Progressive Series in the respective cases. Thus :

$H = m \cdot q, \underline{m}, \underline{M}, \underline{M}$ , while  $S, \underline{S}, \underline{S}, \underline{S} = 1 + a + a^2 + \dots + a^n$   
where the values of  $a$  and  $n$  are respectively—

$$\frac{2}{3}, \frac{3}{4}, \frac{4}{5}, \frac{5}{6} \text{ and } 10, 12, 16, 20$$

$$H = \left[ 1 + \frac{2}{3} + \left( \frac{2}{3} \right)^2 + \dots + \left( \frac{2}{3} \right)^{10} \right]^m = 3m \text{ (approx.)}$$

$$\text{Triguṇa} = \left[ 1 + \frac{3}{4} + \left( \frac{3}{4} \right)^2 + \dots + \left( \frac{3}{4} \right)^{12} \right]^m = 4m \text{ ( „ )}$$

$$\text{Caturguṇa} = \left[ 1 + \frac{4}{5} + \left( \frac{4}{5} \right)^2 + \dots + \left( \frac{4}{5} \right)^{16} \right]^m = 5M \text{ ( „ )}$$

$$\text{Pañcaguṇa} = \left[ 1 + \frac{5}{6} + \left( \frac{5}{6} \right)^2 + \dots + \left( \frac{5}{6} \right)^{20} \right]^m = 6M \text{ ( „ )}$$

by Ṣaḍguṇa sūtra.

When  $H$  is 124 units approximately the Modules would be 40, 30, 24, 20 (approximately). The formula may be further extended to the cases of other hypothetical Sūtras ( \**Dviguna-Sūtra* ) but there must be limits to  $a, n$  and consequently to both the Module and the Height. This is what is implied in the expression Kārya-Mana ( Working Unit ) and is styled Unmana. As in the cases of Indian exact sciences, here also the abstract principles underlying the proposition ( upapatti ) are alone enunciated. The successive steps leading to the result are not

traced in the Canonical treatises. They are obtained either through the traditional expositions of the commentators or through the instructions of the masters ( guru-ganya ). Many of the building processes, which are often complicated and technically difficult, are given in the forms of mnemonic rules. They were not always clearly systematised and reduced into exact formulae. But they must have been known all the same. For example, the Corbelling is defined with great precision : "Laying up horizontally of super-imposed courses ( of stones ) progressively protruding in, entrant and intrusive" ( कदलिकाकरणं उपर्युपर्यन्तरन्तः प्रवेशनं Tantra-samuccaya, II, 47 ). In this case the necessary and sufficient conditions as to how the centre of gravity should always lie within the walls must have been a matter of common knowledge.

Any systematic study of the Canons of Vastu-Sastras and of the extant examples with a view to discover the exact scientific laws could be accomplished only through the combined and prolonged efforts of, and the co-ordinated team-work between, technicians and scholars, under the patronage of a learned institution, possessed with the requisite resources and equipment. The result of such an undertaking will be of far-reaching importance to the history of Indian art and culture.

The Indian conception of the Earth is that of a Goddess, Bhūtadhātṛī, the support of living beings and the mother of created things. In the building art of India therefore the site itself is a living entity. Thus the building procedure begins with the selection of a suitable Vāstu site and the plotting of the ground plan by measuring lines or Sūtras. In this the Sciences of the Stars and Mathematics play a part. The ground plan conforms to a diagram called Vāstu-puruṣa-maṇḍala. Herein find places the deities and the powers, some elemental and beneficent, others malevolent, termed very happily "homeless presences". All of them are invoked and propitiated in the Diagram for protection.

In the human body there is life-breath. Similarly the temples are regarded as the outward frame in which the Highest Being ( Parama-Puruṣa ) descends and abides. The human analogy is completely followed both in ritual and architecture. The names of the human limbs from Pāda to Śikhā and Śiras, are transferred to the architectural elements from the socle and the foundation to the finial of the temples. A number of analogies is also taken from the Āyurveda. Just as the heart, the arteries and the nerves must on no account be injured in the human body so also these imaginary lines must be saved from being built over. In plotting the ground plan, these vital parts are indicated with special care. Some parts again are not to be tampered with by opening doors and windows. The section called Vedha-tyaga, concerning the ground plan, gives all these directions.

A few words may be said regarding some points of interpretations of texts and technical terms :

(i) *Puruṣa, Virāj, Hiranyagarbha*—The famous Puruṣa-Sūkta has been often and variously interpreted by great commentators and scholars. To mention only a few great ones : Uvaṭa ( 11th cent. ) in the Sukla-Yajurveda-bhaṣya, Guṇaviṣṇu ( 12th cent ) in the Chandogya-mantra-bhaṣya, Sayanaçarya ( 14th cent. ) and Mahīdhara ( 16th cent. ) in the Sukla-Yajurveda-bhaṣya, Colebrooke etc. The first and second padas of the 5th verse are very differently construed and interpreted—तस्माद्विराजयत विराजो अधि पुरुषः ; Guṇaviṣṇu—विराजः पुरुषः अधि-अजायत ; Uvaṭa—विराजः अधिपुरुषः अजायत ; Sayana, Mahīdhara—विराजो अधिपुरुषः अजायत ;

The Puruṣa-Sūkta pictures creation as the result of a great general mental sacrifice ( manasa yajña, saṃkalpika ) by immolating Puruṣa, 'embodied spirit of man personified and regarded as the soul and the original source of the universe, the personal and life-giving principle' ( Colebrooke ). In the descending stages of manifestations the Paramatman first becomes Īśvara, the Lord of Creation, in conjunction with his Maya holding

within himself the entire creation in embryo and in ultimate fineness. He is Hiranyagarbha, born as a luminous first principle. He is Virat as the sum-totality of existence ( Brahmanḍa-deha ). With the Virat-deha as the basis, he manifests himself further as individual objects ( Sayana ). The word Puruṣa is sometimes read as Puruṣa for the sake of metre and is derived and interpreted as पुरि देहे शेते इति "the surpreme spirit which abides in the body i. e. the Universe".

(ii) *Puruṣa, Prakṛti, Pradhāna* : According to the Samkhya system of Philosophy, Puruṣa is the eternal conscious being ( sat, cit ) without consciouness but endowed with activity. In the Sakta Tantras, Prakṛti and Pradhana are one and the same primordial principle under different aspects. Prakṛti ( pra-kṛ ) is that by whom all actions are done, also from whom creations begin. Pradhana is the One, as the container of the material which goes into the making of the form, and Prakṛti is the One in its active aspect. In the Kashmir Saiva school, Puruṣa and Prakṛti are of course minor Tattvas or creative principles.

(iii) *Mahākāla* : Kāla has both a transcendental and a minor aspect. As the undifferentiated, persistent and changeless ( Akhaṇḍa, daṇḍayamaṇa, nityakala ) time it is an eternal cosmic principle while as a limited time ( khaṇḍa ) it is not so, but a minor tattva.

(iv) *Śiva and Śakti* : From the Sakta viewpoint, they are inseparable. The Kashmir Saiva school also considers Śakti as inseparable from Lord Śiva and as endowed with supreme reason. The Devī is indeed one with her Lord. She does not have separate and independent shrines. Her shrines are often negligible and situated in inaccessible spots, desert wastes, forests and mountains.

(v) *Yantra, Cakra, Maṇḍala, Āvarana* : These are indispensable accessories of worship in the Saiva, Sakta, Vaiṣṇava and other forms of Indian religion. With the Mahayana Buddhism, they spread to Tibet, China, Japan etc. They are explained both from esoteric and exoteric points of view. The human body is

regarded as the greatest Yantra. The system of Yantras represents graphically the psychological experiences in two or three dimensions. In the science of war the trenches and the ramparts are thrown out after typical Yantra shapes. In architecture too the temples and temple-cities are laid out in the form of these diagrams.

(vi) *Maithuna* : In the esoteric sense this is not physical. The Tantrik Lata-sadhana has no physical counterpart and hence no application in architecture. Mithuna figures are depicted on temples as the highest art must display all the principal flavours (*nava rasa*). The *Ādi rasa*, love, is the original flavour from which the rest are derived. Hence the highest art cannot neglect it. The minor art may omit it.

(vii) *Kūrma*, *Dardūra*, ( *Maṇḍuka* ), *Seṣa*, *Rāhu* : All these had popular fanciful stories of explanations but the deeper scientific explanations are also found. Thus *Kūrma*, *Dardūra* ( *Maṇḍuka* ) are the earth strata, as demonstrated by Pandit Ananda Chandra Vedantavagisa. *Rahu* is earth-umbra or penumbra ( *bhūchaya* ) in the astronomical treatises. *Ananta* ( *Seṣa* ) in the esoteric sense symbolises the *manas* with its thousand-fangled way in which the divinity manifests itself ( Cf. *Prapañca-sāra*, Comm. ).

(viii) *Tagara*, *Tagara-pādukā* ( *Vaidyaka* ) : This is a much valued medicinal herb, highly aromatic and auspicious, mentioned in the group of antiseptics, dromatics, cosmetics and dyes ( Paṇini, IV, 4, 53 ). According to some authorities it is not identifiable with certainty. It is certainly a perfume and a dye obtained from the true *Tagara* *Tabernamontana* *Cornaria*. The family *Apocynacea*, as described by the German Botanists, an evergreen shrub with beautiful white flowers, yellow inside, of delicate petals and mild smell, cannot be the true tree. According to some it is *Valeriana Wallichii*, the rhizomes of which are burnt as incense and yield a perfume.

(ix) *Vasu*, *Vastu*, *Vāstu* : All these are of course derivatives from the root *vas*; there are many such derivatives, but they

belong to different Gaṇas. The Vasus are so called because they over-spread all the diverse creations on the earth, in the atmosphere and the heavens.

(x) *Vardhaki* : From the root *vrdbh*. It has also the sense of cutting ( *chedana* ) as in *nābhi-varuḥana* ( *Manu*, II ). It has also the meaning of cleansing as by a shave : cf. cleansing-brush ( *vardhana* ) from which Beng. *Vaḍhana*, Hindi, *Vaḍhani*, *Vardhaki* ( Beng. *Vaḍhai*, Hindi *Vaḍhai* ) means craftsmen who prepare rough-hewn timber for further use. The carpenter ( *Sūtradhara* ) does finer work.

(xi) *Anḍa* : There is clear evidence that *Anḍa* must have been known as Dome or Cupola. Cf. *Daṇḍi* ( *Daśakumar-* )—*Brahmaṇḍa-chatra-daṇḍa* where *Viṣṇu* is compared to the shaft of the umbrella which is the vault of the Brahman.

(xii) Many instances of the persistence of architectural technique in popular memory can be collected : cf. *Sūtrapata*, *Khilana*, *Deūla*, *Kalaśa* in *Sraddhavedi* etc.

This is essentially a review of the book—*The Hindu Temple* : Vols I & II by Stella Kramrisch, Professor of Indian Art, Calcutta University ; Photographs by Raymond Burnier ; Published by the University of Calcutta, 1946 ; *Vol I*—Text : Parts I-VII ; Charts : (i) The Proportions of the Temples, (ii) The twenty temples : Five plans of temples comprising one vertical section and four ground plans : *Ambaranatha* ( *Konkan* ), *Kandarya & Lakṣaṇeśvara*, ( *Khajuraho* ), *Nilakanthesvara* ( *Udaypur, Gwalior* ), *Vijayālāya Colesvara* ( *Pudukottai* ) ; Two *Rekha* drawing curves of *Śikhara*s, Many figures of *Maṇḍala*s, *Temple types*.

*Vol II*—Part VIII : Explanation of plates : frontispiece and I-LXXX ; Appendix—Chapters from three Sanskrit Texts ; Sources ; Index.



## INDIA'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

*By* PRABODH-CHANDRA SEN

RABINDRANATH TAGORE's song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' has come to occupy a unique place all over India, and even abroad, as one of our finest national songs. The attention of the whole country has recently been focussed on it with reference to the question of selecting it as our National Anthem. Serious charges have also been brought against it in this connection. It has become necessary, therefore, to review the history of the song at length.

The charges are mainly these : first, that the song is a eulogy of King George V, composed on the occasion of his visit to India, and according to some, sung at the Coronation Durbar at Delhi ; secondly, that it is actually a devotional song and as such cannot be given the status of a patriotic song and does not, therefore, deserve the prestige of the National Anthem ; and, thirdly, that it has no all-India appeal—some of the provinces have not been mentioned in it, so that all the provinces cannot accept it as the National Anthem.

A careful study of the text and the history of the song will bring out clearly the fact that these charges have no basis whatsoever. The matter, however, is discussed in detail here on the basis of historical documents which should prove conclusive even for those who insist on concrete evidence.

Of the charges mentioned above, the first is the most serious and should, therefore, be taken up first.

Rabindranath himself said in a letter ( 20. 11. 1937 ) regarding the origin of the song :

A friend, influential in Government circles, had importuned me to compose a song in praise of the King.

His request had amazed me, and the amazement was mingled with anger. It was under the stress of this violent reaction that I proclaimed, in the Janaganamana-Adhinayaka song, the victory of that Dispenser of India's destiny who chariots eternally the travellers through the ages along the paths rugged with the rise and fall of nations— of Him who dwells within the heart of man and leads the multitudes. That the Great Charioteer of Man's destiny in age after age could not by any means be George the Fifth or George the Sixth or any other George, even my 'loyal' friend realised ; because, however powerful his loyalty to the King, he was not wanting in intelligence.

— *Vichitra*, 1344 Paush, p. 709

In the same context Rabindranath says in another letter ( 29.3.1939 ) :

I should only insult myself if I cared to answer those who consider me capable of such unbounded stupidity as to sing in praise of George the Fourth or George the Fifth as the Eternal Charioteer leading the pilgrims on their journey through countless ages of the timeless history of mankind.

— *Purvasha*, 1354 Phalgun, p. 738

## 2

### HISTORY OF THE SONG—THE CONGRESS OF 1911

Some people are under the impression that the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' was composed for and sung on the occasion of the Coronation Durbar of King George V at Delhi. No evidence, however, has been found in support of this strange impression. Detailed descriptions of the Delhi Durbar and of other functions in connection with the King's visit to Calcutta are found in the official publication known as *The Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India, 1911* published by John

Murray, London, in 1914 under the authority and order of the then Viceroy of India. No mention of the song is found anywhere in this publication. It is clear, therefore, that the odium of its association with a British king at the Delhi Durbar that is imputed to this song is utterly baseless.

It is now well-known that the song was first sung in 1911 at the second day's sitting of the Indian National Congress ( December 27 ) held at Calcutta. The Congress was then under the influence of moderate leaders like Surendranath Banerjea. Only a fortnight before ( December 12 ) King George V had proclaimed at the Delhi Durbar the annulment of the partition of Bengal. The king was due to arrive in Calcutta on December 30, two days after the conclusion of the Congress session. Jubilant over the said proclamation, the moderate leaders decided to welcome the royal couple with a declaration of loyalty from the Congress platform and a suitable song became necessary for the occasion. Possibly it was with a request for such a song that Rabindranath Tagore was approached. But the Poet would not compose a song in praise of the emperor of India which he considered to be an act of 'unbounded stupidity', and sang instead the victory of the 'Eternal Charioteer' to whose glory alone he was capable of singing. The friend mentioned above realised that such a song could not be used as a welcome to a mortal king.

A song in praise of the English king was necessary, however. Rabindranath had, therefore, to be given up and a search made elsewhere. A song that satisfied the requirements of the moderate leaders was also found in time, and with this, as I shall show later, 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' was confused by some reporters, ultimately leading to the present controversy.

The first day's proceedings of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in 1911 opened with the singing of 'Vande Mataram'. That day's sitting concluded with the speeches of the Chairman of the Reception Committee and the President of the session. The second day's sitting began with the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' after which messages of good-will from

well-wishers were read out. A resolution was then passed welcoming the royal couple and expressing loyalty to them. The resolution passed, *a Hindi song in praise of the king, composed specially for the occasion*, was sung. This was the song that had consoled the moderate leaders like the 'loyal' friend mentioned above after Rabindranath had disappointed them. After this song ten other resolutions were passed. The sitting then concluded. The third day's sitting commenced with the singing of 'Atita-gaurava-vahini mama vani, gāha aji Hindusthan'. Later with the passing of twenty-two more resolutions, the session came to an end.

A reference to the contemporary press and other reports will throw more light on the character of the song 'Janaganamana' :

#### 1. OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE 28TH SESSION OF THE CONGRESS

The proceedings commenced with a *patriotic* song composed by Babu Rabindranath Tagore. After that [ reading of messages received from friends and passing of the loyalty resolution moved from the chair. ] *a song of welcome* to Their Imperial Majesties composed for the occasion was sung by the choir.

It will be observed that a distinction has been made in this report between the two songs. One is called a patriotic song and the other a song of welcome to the royal couple. This also proves the truth of Rabindranath's statement that in spite of their great loyalty to the king, the moderates of those days did not lack in intelligence. They neither considered nor used the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' as a eulogy of the king.

#### 2 AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 28 DECEMBER, 1911

The proceedings began with the singing of a *Bengali song of benediction*.....This [ the loyalty resolution ] was

followed by another *song in honour of* Their Imperial Majesties' visit to India.

Here also the difference in character of the two songs has been clearly brought out. The dictionary meaning of 'benediction' is—'a solemn *invocation of the divine blessings* on men and things'. The significance of the word 'benediction' will be clearer later.

### 3. THE BENGALEE, 28 DECEMBER, 1911

The proceedings commenced with a *patriotic song* composed by Babu Rabindranath Tagore, the leading poet of Bengal ( Janaganamana-Adhinayaka ), of which we give the English translation—

King of the heart of nations, Lord of our country's fate etc.

Then after the passing of the loyalty resolution—

*A Hindi song paying heartfelt homage* to Their Imperial Majesties was sung by the Bengali boys and girls in chorus.

Surendranath Banerjea was the principal organiser of the 1911 session of the Congress. Full details of the session are therefore naturally found in his paper. In this report also, as in the Congress report, a distinction has been made between the patriotic song and the song of welcome.

Let us now take the Anglo-Indian journals.

### 4. THE ENGLISHMAN, 28 DECEMBER, 1911

The proceedings opened with a *song of welcome* to the King Emperor, specially composed for the occasion by Babu Rabindranath Tagore. . . . This [ loyalty resolution ] was followed by another *song in Hindi welcoming* Their Imperial Majesties.

According to this report the Bengali song by Rabindranath was also a song of welcome to the king This is in contradiction

of the Congress Report and those appearing in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Bengalee*. This report apparently is the source of the oft-repeated calumny against the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka'.

#### 5. THE STATESMAN, 28 DECEMBER, 1911

The proceedings commenced shortly before 12 o'clock with a *Bengali song* . . . . The choir of girls led by Sarala Devi then [ after the loyalty resolution ] sang a *hymn of welcome* to the king specially composed for the occasion by Babu Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet.

No mention has been made in this report of the composer of the opening song in Bengali. It admitted indirectly, however, that the song was not a eulogy of the king; had it been so considered, there could have been no reason for not mentioning it. From the report that the second song was composed by 'Babu Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet', it is clear that the *Statesman* was under the impression that this was also a Bengali song. This report partly contradicts the Indian reports like the Congress Report and partly also that of the *Englishman*. Apparently the *Statesman* reporter did not know that it was the opening song of the day that was composed by Rabindranath. Hence the confusion.

#### 6. REUTER

When the Indian National Congress resumed its session on Wednesday, December 27, a *Bengali song specially composed in honour* of the royal visit was sung and a resolution welcoming the King Emperor and Queen Empress was adopted unanimously.

The above report was sent by Reuter and was published in *India*, a weekly journal in England, on 29.12.1911. This does not tally with that of the *Statesman* and the Indian reports; it partly agrees only with that of the *Englishman*.

It should be noted here that there is complete unanimity in the reports of the three Indian sources quoted above, while the reports of the last three sources are mutually conflicting and are in complete contradiction of the Indian sources. The song that has been called 'patriotic' in the Congress and other reports, has been termed as a 'song' or 'hymn of welcome' by the *Statesman* and the *Englishman*. Reuter has committed the same mistake. Further, the song mentioned as a song of welcome to the king by the Congress and other Indian sources, has been completely left out by the *Statesman* and Reuter. All the three Indian sources report that *one* song of welcome ( *the Hindi song* ) was sung *after* the loyalty resolution was passed, whereas the *Englishman* has produced *two* songs of welcome—one prior and the other subsequent to the loyalty resolution. The *Statesman* did not make this mistake, but it made another and a greater one. According to the Congress Report the sitting *commenced* with Rabindranath's song, whilst the *Statesman* places it *after* the loyalty resolution. There are other serious discrepancies too in the reports of the Congress session published in the *Englishman* and the *Statesman*. This clearly proves that the reporters of these two journals and Reuter were more keen on giving publicity to the loyalty portion of the session than on the correctness of the news they relayed. None of these three sources can, therefore, be accepted as reliable.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it

1 What confusion such reporters are capable of making and how much credence may be attached to their reports, have been recently demonstrated by Mr. Alwyn Tebbitsee, the New Delhi representative of the *Sunday Times* of London. The following, despatched by Mr. Tebbitsee, appeared in the May 15, 1949 issue of the *Sunday Times* :

The National Anthem issue is a battle between two songs, "Bando Mataram"—"Mother, I come to thee,"—written by Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet, and "Jana Gana Mana," a modern *Hindi Song*, favoured by Pandit Nehru because it is most easily transcribed into Western music and can be played by a Western military band.

"Jana Gana Mana" is now claimed to mean "Mother India, thou giver of all wealth, culture and goodness," but it was actually written at George V's coronation and is a psalm of praise for the King as the giver of all wealth, culture and goodness. Although "Bande Mataram" has certainly the better words, the tune to which it is sung sounds to Western ears like a jam-session band-leader's nightmare. "Jana Gana Mana" will most likely win the day.

It is to be noted that Mr. Tebbitsee, like his predecessors of 1911, has confused Jana Gana Mana with the *Hindi song* ( mentioned above ) that was actually composed in honour of King George V. *vide* Amrita Bazar Patrika, 20 June, 1949, p. 4—"National Anthem Muddle".

is needless to place any reliance on them when we have before us the official report of the Congress, the reports of the Indian newspapers and lastly the utterances of Rabindranath himself.

It is not known whether Rabindranath had contradicted these reports. Possibly he considered it insulting to himself to contradict the 'unbounded stupidity' of *Englishman*, etc. Or, it is quite possible that the reports in Anglo-Indian papers escaped his attention. Further, the mere fact that a false bit of news has not been contradicted, does not necessarily make it true. However, a review of the later history of the song will convince the reader that the reports of the *Englishman*, *Statesman* and Reuter are completely without any foundation. I propose now to trace that history.

## 3

### 'A SONG IN PRAISE OF THE DISPENSER OF HUMAN DESTINY'

The song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' was first sung at the Indian National Congress on December 27, 1911. A glance at its further history in the next month will convince the reader of the real character of the song.

1. In January, 1912, one month after the Congress session, the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' was first published under the title *Bharata-vidhata* in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* (the official organ of the Adi Brahma Samaj), of which Rabindranath himself was the Editor. It had also a sub-title—'Brahmasangit'—which substantiates the Poets declaration, quoted earlier, that it was the King of Kings that was addressed as *Bharata-vidhata* and no earthly king or emperor.<sup>2</sup>

2. In the same month *Bharati*, a Bengali monthly, published an account of the Congress session, by a writer who was

<sup>2</sup> It may be stated in this connection that the English rendering of the song as published in the *Bengalee* on December 28, 1911 is an exact translation of the original published in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* of January 1912.



evidently present on all the three days, giving an interesting description of the songs that were sung in that session. This has special value as contemporary evidence. The relevant extracts are given below :

The Indian National Congress held its session on 26, 27 and 28 December last. Each day's proceedings commenced with a song to the glory of the motherland. The first day's song was an invocation to the mother-image of India with her hurrying streams and rich green fields ; the song of the second day was in praise of the Dispenser of human destiny, the Lord of the three worlds who, परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृतां धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय, appears in every age ; the third day's song was a hymn to Hindusthan, the rich repository of the memories of past glories. These songs, in which the sweet voices of the girls mingled with the deep voices of the men, filled one's heart with reverence and brought tears to the eyes. Like the smell of burning incense which prepares the mind for worship, the hymns sung by the choir of youths and girls produced a feeling of adoration in the mind.

—*Bharati*, 1318 Magh, pp. 996-97

According to this description, the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' is both a song of glory of the motherland and a hymn in praise of the Lord of the Universe, the Dispenser of human destiny. Further, according to the writer, the Divine Charioteer of Arjuna, who said सम्भवामि युगे युगे, is the same Eternal Charioteer who drives India's history through the ages along the road rugged with the rise and fall of nations. This description completely refutes the reports of the *Englishman*, the *Statesman* and *Reuter*.

3. Later, in the same month of Magh ( January 25 ), this song was sung at the Maghotsava ceremony at the Tagore household under the direction of Rabindranath himself. Thus there can hardly be any doubt that the song was addressed to the Lord of the Universe and not to any mortal being. At the same

Maghotsava ceremony Rabindranath delivered an address entitled 'The New Era in Religion' which ended thus :

"May we stake our all and fearlessly join Man's triumphant march towards the eternal—

जय जय जय हे, जय विश्वेश्वर, मानवभाग्यविधाता ।"

( Glory be unto the Lord of the Universe,  
the Dispenser of human destiny ).

—*Tattvabodhini Patrika*, Phalgun 1318, p. 272

and *Bharati*, Phalgun 1318, p. 1089

We have already seen that shortly before this address the *Bharati*, in its account of the Congress session, described the Being invoked in the song 'Janaganamana' as the 'Dispenser of *human* destiny'. The two utterances of Rabindranath, quoted at the beginning of this article, have described Him as the Eternal Charioteer of *human* destiny. This description of the Dispenser of human destiny as *Bharata-vidbata* at different times and by different people is certainly not without significance. It is also not surprising, coming as it does, from Rabindranath Tagore the votary of humanism and the devotee of the Eternal Man.

#### 4

#### A SECRET OFFICIAL CIRCULAR

4. On the day subsequent to the Maghotsava ceremony the following secret circular issued by the Director of Public Instruction in the province of East Bengal and Assam as it then was, found its way into the columns of the *Bengalee* ( 26 January, 1912, p. 4 ) :

It has come to my knowledge that an institution known as the 'Santiniketan' or 'Brahmacharyasrama' at Bolpur in the Birbhum District of Bengal is a place *altogether unsuitable for the education of the sons of Government servants*. As I have information that some Government servants in this province have sent their children there,

I think it necessary to ask you to warn any well-disposed Government servant whom you may know or believe to have sons at this institution or to be about to send sons to it, to withdraw them or refrain from sending them, as the case may be ; *any connection with the institution in question is likely to prejudice the future of the boys who remain pupils of it after the issue of the present warning.*

The circular did immense harm to Santiniketan as many students had to leave. The song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' was sung at the Congress session in December and only a few days later, it was the time of admission of new students, the circular was issued. It is clear that if Rabindranath had descended to the level of a panegyrist of the king, such a circular would never have been necessary.

It is well-known that Rabindranath and Santiniketan were not in the good books of the Government, owing to the Poet's political views and his independence of spirit and opinion. It is also well-known that from his early youth Rabindranath had strongly criticised the 'prayer and petition' politics of the moderates. Even before the Swadeshi Movement he had been insisting on reliance on self-help, and in the movement following the partition of Bengal that stirred the whole province to its depths, he occupied a distinguished place among the leaders. He was also one of the pioneers of the Sivaji Utsava and a fearless champion of Aurobindo Ghose who had incurred the wrath of the British government. The place he occupied in the hearts of his countrymen, when the song under discussion was composed, is well illustrated by the following extract from a contemporary newspaper report :

He [ Rabindranath ] has not only been a life-long devotee of the Bengali language and literature, but has rendered conspicuous service, by means of his writings, to the cause of national self-help and self-reliance of which he was undoubtedly one of the pioneers.

—*The Bengalee*, 31 January 1912, p. 4

## The Morning song of India

Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people, dispenser of India's destiny. Thy name rouses the hearts of the Punjab, Sind, Gujarat and Maratha, of Deccan and Orissa and Bengal; it echoes in the hills of the Vindhya and Himalayas, mingles in the music of the Ganges and the Yamuna, and is chanted by the surging waves of the Indian Sea. They pray for thy blessings and sing thy praise. The saving of all people waits in thy hand, thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

Day and night thy voice goes out from land to land <sup>calling</sup> ~~bringing~~ the Hindus, Buddhists, Shikhs and Jains round thy throne and the Parsees, Mussalmans and Christians. The East and the West join hands in their prayers to thee, and the garland of love is woven. Thou bringest the hearts of all people into the harmony of one life, thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, victory to thee.

The procession of pilgrims passes over the endless road rugged with the rise and fall of nations; and it resounds with the thunder of thy wheels, Eternal Character! Through the dire days of doom thy trumpet sounds and men are led by thee across death. Thy finger points the path to all people. Oh dispenser of India's destiny!

Victory, Victory, Victory to thee!

The darkness was dense and deep was the night. My country lay in a deathlike silence of swoon. But thy Mother's arms were round her and thine eyes gazed upon her troubled face in sleepless love through her hours of ghastly dreams. Thou art the companion and the saviour of the people in their sorrows, thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, Victory to thee!

The night <sup>fade</sup> ~~darkness~~; the light breaks over the peaks of the Eastern hills; the birds begin to sing and the morning breeze carries the breath of new life. The rays of thy mercy have touched the waking land with their blessings. Victory to thee King of Kings, Victory to thee, the dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

Rabindranath Tagore

Feb. 28. 1919



It is needless to state that such a person could never have been in the good books of the Government.

In his estimate of Rabindranath's patriotism Ramananda Chatterjee, Editor, *The Modern Review*, wrote about his songs :

His patriotic songs are characteristic. Some of them enthrone the Motherland as the Adored in the shrines of our souls, some sound the clarion call to our drooping spirits, filling us with hope and the will to do and dare and suffer.

—*The Modern Review*, February 1912, p. 229  
and further, that they—

Make the heart beat thick and fast, and the blood tingle and leap and course in our veins.

The extracts from the documents quoted above prove conclusively that it was the Lord of the Universe, and no earthly king, who has been described and invoked as *Bharata-vidbata* in the song 'Janaganamana'. Hence it was incorporated in Rabindranath's *Dharma-Sangit*, a collection of religious hymns. It is well-known that Rabindranath's patriotism was not divorced from his spirituality. At about the same time that the song was composed, *The Modern Review* (February 1912, p. 230) said that 'his politics and his spiritual ministrations merge in each other.' That is why the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' was sung both at the Congress session and at the Maghotsava ceremony.<sup>8</sup> This song, like 'Vande Mataram', has transformed the spiritual urge into the patriotic, with the difference that the former is completely non-sectarian or 'all-sectarian' in its spirit while the same cannot be said of the latter.

## 5

### THE POET'S MIND

The evidence produced so far completely refutes the charges against the song of its being a eulogy of King George V.

<sup>8</sup> In the opinion of Mahatma Gandhi also it was not only a 'national song' but also like a 'devotional hymn.' *Vide Harijan*, 19 May 1946.

An analysis of Rabindranath's mind at that time will also bear this out.

The ideal that inspired Rabindranath's patriotic novel *Gora* published early in 1910, is forcefully brought out by the hero's utterances towards the end of the book :

Today I am really an Indian ! In me there is no longer any opposition between Hindu, Mussalman and Christian. To-day every caste in India is my caste ! ... To-day give me the *mantram* of that Deity who belongs to all, Hindu, Musalman, Christian and Brahmo alike, ... of Him who is not merely the God of the Hindus, but is the God of India herself.

—*Gora*, Chapter 76

It is this 'God of India herself' who has been described as *Bharata-vidhata* in the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka'. Here also *Bharata-vidhata* has been described as the God of the Hindu, Musalman, Christian, Parsee etc.

Rabindranath's famous poem *Bharata-tirtha* <sup>4</sup> was composed on July 2, 1910, shortly after *Gora* was published. Here also as in 'Janaganamana' we find the contemplation of India's physical entity in the beginning and then the message of unity to all her communities. This strain occurs again and again in all his

4 O heart of mine, awake in this holy place of pilgrimage,  
In this land of India, on the shore of vast humanity.  
Here do I stand with arms outstretched to salute man divine,  
And sing his praise in many a gladsome psalm.  
These hills that are rapt in deep meditation.  
These plains that clasp their rosaries of rivers,  
Here you will find earth that is ever sacred,  
In this land of India, on the shore of vast humanity.  
Come Aryan, non-Aryan, Hindu, Mussalman, come.  
Come ye Parsees, O Christians come ye one and all.  
Come Brahmins, let your hearts be hallowed by holding all men by the hand.  
Come all ye who are shunned and isolated, wipe out all dishonour.  
Come to the crowning of the Mother, fill the sacred bowl  
With water that is sanctified by the touch of all  
In this land of India, on the shore of vast humanity.

political writings and this was the ideal that he propagated to his last days. Here are a few instances

In the year 1917, a few months before the Calcutta session of the Congress, when due to various reasons the province of Bengal was in a state of high political tension, the Poet published his famous article *Thou Shalt Obey* and, as a sequel, the well-known song '*Desa Desa Nandita Kari*' (*Prabasi*, Bhadra 1324, pp. 509-22). He writes in that article as a prologue to the song—'The ageless and ever wakeful *Deity of our country* is calling to our souls'. It will be noticed that the spirit behind the two songs '*Janaganamana-Adhinayaka*' and '*Desa Desa Nandita Kari*' is essentially the same and that even the language is similar. For example, the following lines from '*Janaganamana*' :

Eternal Charioteer, thou drivest man's history  
along the road rugged with rises and falls of Nations.  
Amidst all tribulations and terror  
thy trumpet sounds to hearten those that despair and  
droop.

may well compare with the following from '*Desa Desa Nandita Kari*' :

The world's highroads are crowded,  
resounding with the roar of thy chariot wheels.

Thus the invocations in the novel *Gora* and the three poems *Bharata-tirtha*, *Janaganamana-Adhinayaka* and *Desa Desa Nandita Kari* can, by no stretch of imagination, be considered as made to a foreign king. The inspiration behind them was in fact quite the reverse and eventually led the Poet to renounce his Knighthood less than two years after the last mentioned song was composed.

Mention must be made here of the Poet's '*India's Prayer*', translated from his original Bengali poems during the latter part of the same year, as there is a striking similarity between this poem and the song '*Janaganamana-Adhinayaka*'.



## 6

## 'A SONG OF THE VICTORY OF INDIA'—THE CONGRESS OF 1917

Now let us come to the Congress session of 1917. The Congress, when it held its Calcutta session in 1917, was no longer dominated by the moderates ; the 'extremist' leaders were in the fore-front. Rabindranath himself was present at this session and read out the poem 'India's Prayer' as the opening invocation.<sup>5</sup> The first day's sitting ( December 26 ) commenced as usual with the singing of 'Vande Mataram'. Of the other songs sung on that day special mention must be made of 'Desa Desa Nandita Kari' :

A number of other songs were also sung in the musical programme including Sir Rabindranath's *latest patriotic song*, 'Desa Desa Nandita Kari.

—*The Bengalee*, 27 December 1917

The second day's sitting commenced with Sarala Devi's song 'Atita-gaurava-vahini' and the third day's with 'Janagamana-Adhinayaka'. The newspaper reports of this latter song are given below—

The Congress chorus then chanted the *magnificent song* of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, *Jana-gana-mana*, Maharaja Bahadur of Nattore himself joining in aid of the instrumental music.

—*The Bengalee*, 30 December 1917

<sup>5</sup> "Then Sir Rabindranath rose to offer his benedictions in a melodious and inspiring verse specially composed for the occasion".

—*The Bengalee*, 27 December 1917

The Official Report of the Congress ( p. 1 ) states :

"The Chairman of the Reception Committee then called upon Sir Rabindranath Tagore to read out to his opening invocation. Sir Rabindra, who received tremendous ovation, then recited the following verse in a voice which, reaching the furthest corner of the pandal, hushed the vast audience with its music and heart-felt eloquence."

The similarity of ideas in 'Janaganamana' and 'India's Prayer' has already been mentioned. It will be enough to state here that in 1911 the first was called a song of *benediction* and in 1917 the second has also been described as *benediction* or *invocation*. Both are in the same category ; both offer India's heart-felt prayer to the Lord of the Universe.

The Indian National Congress sat at 11 A. M., the proceedings commencing with an *inspiring patriotic song* of Rabindranath as usual in chorus, the Maharaja of Natore joining in instrumental music.

—*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 31 December 1917

*A national song* composed by Sir Rabindranath Tagore having been sung the following resolution was moved...

—*The Statesman*, 30 December 1917

The last report is highly significant. The reader will do well to note that what, to the *Englishman*, *Statesman* and Reuter, was a song of welcome to the King in 1911 was considered, by the Statesman at least, a national song in 1917.

In that day's sitting Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das paid high tribute from the platform to this song. The official report of the Congress ( p. 1 ) reproduced Deshbandhu's speech :

Brother delegates, at the very outset I desire to refer to the song to which you have just listened. *It is a song of the glory and victory of India* We stand to-day on this platform for the glory and victory of India (cheers).

*The Bengalee*, 30 December 1917, reports :

Mr. C. R. Das . . . desired to refer to the song which they had just listened to. It was *the song of the victory of India* ( hear, hear ). They stood there that day on that platform for the glory and victory of India ( hear, hear ).

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 31st December 1917, gives an identical report.

If the song had been composed and sung in honour of the king in 1911, when the moderates were in power, then it could never have been sung and unanimously accepted as a patriotic song in the Congress of 1917 when it had passed into the control of the 'extremists'. It is needless to state that Deshbandhu had enough literary sense to appreciate the true spirit of the song and it is not without reason that Subhas Chandra, his disciple, was so devoted to it.

## 7

## AN ALL-INDIA SONG

In the year 1927, in a letter written from Java (31 August), Rabindranath writes :

In the course of our history, India had once deeply realised her geographical entity ; she established in her mind an image of her own physical self by meditating on her rivers and hills. . . . In my song of the victory of *Bharata-vidhata* composed a few years ago, I have put together a number of Indian provinces ; Vindhya-Himachala and Yamuna-Ganga have also been mentioned. I feel, however, that a song should be written in which all the provinces, rivers and hills of India are strung together in order to impress upon the minds of our people an idea of the geography of our country. We are nowadays profuse in the use of the term *National Consciousness*, but what kind of national consciousness can there be, devoid of actual geographical and ethnological realisation ?

— *Yātri, Jāvājatrir Patra, Letter 10*

It is seen here that according to Rabindranath the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' is a song of the victory of *Bharata-vidhata* and is not meant to be an inventory of geographical names. All the provinces, rivers and hills are not, therefore, mentioned in the song, which is intended only to portray India in her entirety. The provinces left out have no reason, therefore, to feel aggrieved.

## 8

## "THE MORNING SONG OF INDIA"

In the year 1919, during his tour of South India, Rabindranath spent five days at the Theosophical College, Madanapalle, at the invitation of Principal James H. Cousins. There he sang

the song 'Janaganamana' at some function. The audience was very much moved by the tune and at their request he made an English translation of the song and called it 'The Morning Song of India'. The college authorities, greatly impressed by the tune and the lofty ideals of the song, selected it as their prayer song to be sung every morning before the day's work commenced. In a letter ( 23. 7. 34 ) Principal Cousins writes :

Every working morning Janaganamana is sung by hundreds of young people in our big hall. We want to extend its *purifying influence* by sending copies of it to other schools and colleges in India and by making it known abroad.

Later, in the year 1936, a facsimile of the Poet's translation mentioned above was published in the College Commemoration Volume and distributed widely, with a note that this 'would become *one of the world's most precious documents*.... From Madanapalle Janagana has spread all over India, and is admired in Europe and America.'

In the next year ( 1937 ), when a bitter controversy was raging throughout the whole country over the selection of India's National Anthem, Principal Cousins issued a statement to the Press ( 3. 11. 37 ) in which he stated :

My suggestion is that Dr. Rabindranath's own *intensely patriotic*, ideally stimulating, and at the same time world-embracing *Morning Song of India (Janaganamana)* should be confirmed *officially, as what it has for almost twenty years been unofficially, namely, the true National Anthem of India.*

## 9

### THE CONGRESS AND THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

The main portion of a resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee, sitting in Calcutta on October 28, 1937, is given below :

Taking all things into consideration, therefore, the Committee recommends that wherever the 'Bande Mataram' is sung at national gatherings, only the first two stanzas should be sung, with perfect freedom to the organisers to sing any other song of an unobjectionable character, in addition to, or *in place of*, the 'Bande Mataram' song.

A Sub-Committee was formed from among the Working Committee members for selecting the songs that could be sung 'in addition to or in place of Vande Mataram'. In the Sub-Committee were Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then President of the Congress and Subhas-chandra Bose. Of the songs to be selected by this Sub-Committee it was stated by the Working Committee that

only such songs as are composed in simple Hindusthani or can be adapted to it, and have a rousing and inspiring tune will be accepted by the Sub-Committee for examination. The Sub-Committee shall consult and take the advice of Poet Rabindranath Tagore.

The resolution passed by the Working Committee was then ratified by the A. I. C. C., also sitting in Calcutta at that time. Probably no such song was ultimately selected. We find, however, that both Pandit Nehru and Subhas-chandra later accepted 'Janaganamana' as India's National Anthem. When Subhas-chandra formed his Azad Hind Fauz in Germany, it was 'Janaganamana' that was selected as the National Anthem. Later also in South-East Asia this song was given the status of the National Anthem. At that time a Hindusthani rendering of the song was made at Subhas-chandra's instance. In spite of the slight verbal alterations made in the Hindusthani version, the tune and the spirit of the original have remained intact. As a matter of fact the Azad Hind Government considered the Hindusthani version the same as the original so that in the directions contained in the Arze Hakumat-I-Azad Hind it has been stated that '*Tagore's song Jaya-ho* has become our National Anthem.'<sup>6</sup>

6 Vide *The Diary of a Rebel Daughter of India*.

## JANAGANAMANA AND THE I. N. A.

Subhas-chandra fully endorsed the Congress leaders' proposal to cut out portions of 'Vande Mataram' as, according to him, 'the Congress cannot consider anything from the point of view of Bengal or any particular community alone—to-day all problems must be considered from an all-India view-point'. He also had no objection to accepting any other song as the National Anthem if that song were found to be more suitable and appropriate in tune and idea than 'Vande Mataram'. At the time of founding the Azad Hind Government, therefore, we find him accepting the Congress flag with the charkha-emblem, but unwilling to accept even the abbreviated 'Vande Mataram'. We find him instead accepting Rabindranath's 'song of the victory of India' as the National Anthem. This clearly proves that he considered 'Janaganamana' the most suitable National Anthem for India. The statement recently issued by Sri Anandmohan Sahay, Minister, Azad Hind Government, also supports this view.

Sri Sahay also says that

So far as language is concerned it does not play such an important part as the tune of an anthem when played in a foreign country or at an international gathering.

The song 'Janaganamana' has long been accepted as far superior to any other song from the standpoint of inspiring music. We find from Sri Sahay's statement that the people of Thailand, Burma, China, etc., were highly impressed by the tune of this song and that even the people of Germany and Japan, who are so proud of their own anthems, admitted that the tune of 'Janaganamana' was no less inspiring than their own.

The appeal of the song 'Janaganamana' is both universal and eternal. It is thus most suited to be selected as the National Anthem of India with all her provinces and communities. The spirit which prompted Subhas-chandra to support the abridge-

ment of 'Vande Mataram' in 1937 was probably the same spirit that led him to select 'Janaganamana' later as India's National Anthem.

This selection did not belie his expectations. The ideal that led the Azad Hind Fauz heroically to lay down their lives in Kohima and Imphal, immortalising these battlefields in India's history, was without doubt greatly inspired by the spirit of the song 'Janaganamana' and its rousing tune. The establishing of the Azad Hind Government and the glorious deeds of the Azad Hind Fauz are inseparably connected with this song. Thus the song 'Janaganamana-Adhinayaka' has not only earned for itself the glorious tradition of being associated with an unforgettable chapter in India's history, it has also added considerably to the rich store-house of Indian traditions.

## AL-BIRUNI AND FIRDAUSI

By J. C. TAVADIA

AL-BIRUNI IS ONE OF the most remarkable figures in the history of post-Islamic Persia. By history one generally understands political history—history of kings and, by way of corollary, their ministers who govern their countries, and of their generals who fight their battles. But history is to be taken in the broadest sense of the term,—including all the departments of life. Indeed, Al-Biruni is said to have played some part also in the politics of his native country Khwarizm, the territory of modern Khiva, as councillor of the ruling prince of the Ma'muni family. But for the purpose of this article I propose exclusively to deal with his other activity, namely, that in science and literature. Here too—and therein lies the remarkability—his works fall in the field of oriental antiquities, a subject which is found so rare and strange even in our advanced age. Moreover, the nature and method of his studies and the circumstances under which he carried them out, are such that they cannot but evoke our high admiration.

It is therefore in the fitness of things that the "Iran Society" of Calcutta has come forward to celebrate the millenary of this eminent scholar of the bygone days. Al-Biruni was born in September 973 and died on the 13th December, 1048. Thus it will be now exactly 900 Christian or solar years since his death, but a little more than 1000 Muhammadan or lunar years since his birth. Whatever one may think of this chronological detail, the proposal to revive the memory of Al-Biruni should be considered as a happy sign of the times. We orientals are generally prone to what is called fine literature—poetry, *belles lettres* and the like ; we neglect other branches of literature like history and still more the harder and drier scientific studies in general. But



by coming forward to celebrate the millenary of a man like Al-Biruni, we show that we are no longer blind to the importance of such subjects also.

Moreover, the event will offer us another object-lesson as regards our outlook and attitude towards oriental studies. In spite of western examples, which we are supposed to follow, we are still under the sway of tradition, and are not even free from prejudice. Love for knowledge, for facts, should be the motive, and proper application of proper means to acquire them should be the endeavour. Al-Biruni fulfils both these conditions in his works. His outlook also is not narrow. He tries to find out facts about other peoples, and that is really remarkable. Such catholic interest is rather rare and also difficult to cultivate. There is no gainsaying that orientalistics is a vast subject. One has to restrict oneself to one or another branch. But one cannot afford to neglect the rest altogether; they have not only their own importance, but are also likely to throw light on one's special subject owing to their historical and other relations to it. The example of Al-Biruni ought to open our eyes on this point at least.

There is another fact which must have inspired the idea of celebrating the millenary of Al-Biruni. Some years ago a greater son of Persia, whom someone reckoned among the greatest along with Zarathustra and Darius, was considered worthy of this honour all over the civilised world. He was no other than Firdausi, who by his immortal epic, the *Shah-nama*, 'the Annals of the Kings', brought Iran to life again ( '*ajam kardā zīnda* '), as he proudly and justly claimed.

In the life and labours of these two great men there is a very remarkable resemblance. The destiny of both is connected with Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. Attracted by the rising fortune of the young emperor, Firdausi repaired to his court in the high hope of great reward for his *Shah-nama*. But when his labours were over he was thoroughly disappointed. The scant treatment meted out to him by Mahmud is too well known to be related

here. One can forget the great wars waged by this monarch, but not his mean behaviour in the case of Firdausi. Jami hits the mark, when he sings :

*'guzasht shawkat i Mahmūd, u dar fasana na-mand  
juz īn qadar, ki na-tanist qadr i Firdausi'*

Gone is the greatness of Mahmud, and remained not

in story

But this much : 'He knew not the worth of Firdausi,'

( nor glory ).

Indeed, Mahmud cannot be called a great patron of letters, but rather a great kidnapper of literary men, who flocked to his court often by virtue rather of compulsion than attraction,—just as it happened in post-war Europe with scientists. One such victim was our Al-Biruni. He, along with the great physician-philosopher, Avicenna ( Abu'Ali ibn Sina ) and various other notable scholars and poets, was at the court of Khwarizm. Mahmud in his haughty power demanded their delivery. Avicenna escaped, but Al-Biruni and some others went *nolens volens*. According to Sachau, who has made two of his principal works accessible in English as well as in original Arabic, he was carried away as one of the hostages after Mahmud occupied that country in 1017 A. D. In any case, he did not bask in the sunshine of royal favour. The anecdotes related in Chahar Maqala about his cruel treatment by the new master on his true forecasts—for the perverse King wished to see the great scholar in the wrong—may or may not have any historical background. However, they show the general trend of Mahmud's mind, his lack of appreciation of true genius as in the case of Firdausi.

Sachau has brought forward a better argument to prove that this Sultan was not a patron and benefactor of Al-Biruni. If he had been that, Al-Biruni would have erected in his work on India a monument to the memory of the dead King, under whose rule he had made the preparations for it. Not only has

he not done so, but also the terms in which he refers to Mahmud throughout this work are not such as an oriental author would use for his deceased benefactor, especially when one compares his other dedications in highly Byzantinian style.

Moreover, we have Al-Biruni's own testimony, his words of complaint about the lack of proper means and support to make the best use of his excellent opportunities. He says : "What scholar has the same favourable opportunities of studying this subject as I have ? . . But the grace of God did not accord to me a perfectly free disposal of my own doings and goings." This cannot but refer, on the one hand, to the luck and ability he had of conversing with pandits at various places in India where he wandered, of procuring their help in finding, buying, and interpreting Indian books ; and then, on the other hand, to the lack of financial support which could naturally come from the King and his satellites. Out of his other remarks we shall quote only one : "The scholars are well aware of the use of money, but the rich are ignorant of the nobility of science." Al-Biruni was a scholar and historian ; he therefore put his complaint in a modest and matter-of-fact form. Firdausi was an enraged poet ; he therefore put his complaint in a bitter satire full of invectives. But the result is the same. They agree in their judgement of the King who treated them in an equally mean and unkindly manner.

Besides this more or less common fate in their life, there is a certain common trait in their works also. This may appear strange at first sight, since their lines of work were different. As we have just said, Firdausi was a poet, a man of fancy and imagination ; Al-Biruni was a scholar, a man of exact sciences. Yet just as the latter is known as a very conscientious investigator of facts and figures for his standard works to be referred to below, so also is the former for fidelity to the sources he availed himself of for his immortal epic. This is a great poem of supreme merit, one of the few famous world-epics, and the only one of the special type, the national epic delineating the history of a

people. And yet the poet's fidelity to his sources,—namely, the Persian versions of the royal records, the *Khwatay-Namak*, and other works of allied nature,—can bear comparison with that of a scientific historian. While writing on Wolff's Lexicon of the *Shah-nama*, I had explained Firdausi's preponderate use of purely Persian vocables and general avoidance of Arabic ones as due to his adherence to his sources.<sup>1</sup>

In the absence of those original sources, this view of mine could not be fully demonstrated till now. We have only some general remarks about the close resemblance between a couple of epic fragments preserved in Pahlavi and the corresponding portions of the *Shah-nama*. But on another occasion I hope to show how closely Firdausi has followed his original, the new Persian version of an extant Pahlavi text. One can follow sentence by sentence, and thereby sometimes choose the right variant in the *Shah-nama* and sometimes interpret a doubtful word in the Pahlavi original properly. Interpolations and lacunae can also be accounted for. In short, the great poet has really tried to collect his sources diligently and to reproduce them faithfully—however poetically he may have done it, though.

Indeed, there are several other names who have adorned this Augustan Age of Iranian Literature,—although often in Arabic garb. The period really deserves the name of Persian Renaissance, and it requires careful study and proper appreciation. No doubt, a man and a scholar like the late Edward G. Browne has done creditable justice to it in his monumental work, *A Literary History of Persia*; but a revised and up-to-date account is long due. This is by the way.

I said above that Al-Biruni was a scholar and a historian; strictly speaking he was an astronomer and above all a chronologist, in which capacity he took interest in the history—in a wider sense—of various peoples, and thus has been of great use to us

1 See The Iran League Quarterly 6, 89 ff. 1936. Any other explanation is unconvincing.

orientalists. It is worth while to dwell upon this point a little. One of his monumental works, *Al-Athar'l-baqiya*, better known under the title of its English translation *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, is a veritable mine of information, for instance, about religious customs amongst Zoroastrian communities in different provinces like Sughd and Khwarizm. Incidentally the native terms of months, festivals etc. give us some insight into the characteristic traits of their dialects. It is from this however scanty information that the middle Sogdian language was identified in some ancient manuscripts discovered from the sand-buried ruins of Turfan, in Chinese Turkistan, in the beginning of this century. The same happened, in a limited degree, as regards the fragments in Khwarizmi more recently. Here it is enough to remind how the question of intercalation in Zoroastrian calendar was brought into better light and greater prominence, thanks to the information supplied by Al-Biruni, when Sachau made him accessible in English,—and again quite recently when his study was, so to say, revived.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the mss. used by Sachau were defective just at the point where the account of Zoroaster was given. Very probably religious fanaticism of weaker minds and darker ages led to the destruction of the folios in question.

Such was however not always the case. For now we know that some mss. are still intact, and contain the missing account of Zoroaster. Taqizadeh, for instance, refers to a couple of such complete manuscripts in Tehran and Istanbul.<sup>3</sup> Other such references are not available at Santiniketan, not even the second instalment which Taqizadeh was to publish in the next issue of the same journal. But even in the extract quoted by him from the *Danishmandani Azarbaijan* of Muhammad Ali Tarbiyat one finds a number of orthodox and unorthodox traditions about Zoroaster—and also something new, for instance, a

2 See the luminous contribution by Taqizadeh.

3 Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies 8, 974 ff.

genealogy of Aturpat Mahraspand. The orthography of Iranian words there is also instructive.<sup>4</sup>

The other work in which Al-Biruni shines forth as a genuine scholar in the best and most modern sense, of the term, is his *Ta'rikh-i-Hind* or '*History of India*'. (In spite of the boredom of repetition I must add that the word 'history' is not used in its narrow and conventional meaning). This work evokes our admiration and wonder at the same time. The very idea of preparing it should be considered unique. There are few instances of such noble and notable attempts. The accounts of India by Megasthenes and other Greek authors, which are limited in scope, may be taken as a matter of course. And later Chinese records of travel and research in India are inspired and actuated by more or less personal motives—motives of knowledge of one's own faith and creed, not to mention that of acquiring religious merit.<sup>5</sup> But in the case of Al-Biruni one cannot attribute any such motives. He rather affords an illustrious example of a man searching and working for knowledge out of the pure intellectual curiosity of acquainting himself with his fellowmen. His object is to find out the truth, be it pleasant or not; and he has really done so. It is worth while to quote his own words from the Preface (pp. 5 ff.) to the work as to how he came to write it:

"When I once called upon the master 'Abu-Sahl...I found that he blamed the tendency of the author of a book on the

4 Dr. Max Krause, my friend and colleague at Hamburg University, was also to publish this account about Zoroaster along with his other studies on Al-Biruni's works. He was not only an excellent Arabist, but was also a very capable mathematician, and for this reason was in the best position to deal with the problems arising from the works of Al-Biruni. He was well advanced in his great task, but the last war put an end to it. He was recruited, and fell in the field of battle within a few months. Even from the general Iranian point of view the information afforded by Al-Biruni is not yet worked out and commented upon in entirety.

5 As to Indians themselves, their learned men, the Brahmins, would never think of studying anything but what the law prescribed. Hence there does not arise the question of their interest and investigation in any foreign matter.

Mu'tazila sect to misrepresent their theory...Thereupon I pointed out to the master that precisely the same method is much in fashion among those who undertake the task of giving an account of religious and philosophical systems from which they slightly differ or to which they are entirely opposed...In order to illustrate the point of our conversation, one of those present referred to the religions and doctrines of the Hindus by way of an example. At a subsequent period the master 'Abu-Sahl studied the books in question a second time, and when he found the matter exactly as I have here described it, he incited me to write down what I know about the Hindus...In order to please him I have done so, and written this book on the doctrines of the Hindus, never making any unfounded imputations against those, our religious antagonists, and at the same time not considering it inconsistent with my duties as a Muslim to quote their own words at full length when I thought they would contribute to elucidate a subject. If the contents of these quotations happen to be utterly heathenish, and the followers of the truth, i. e. the Muslims, find them objectionable, we can only say that such is the belief of the Hindus, and that they themselves are best qualified to defend it. This book is not a polemical one... It is nothing but a simple historic record of facts".

Now, can there be anything more commendable than those words beginning with "never making etc." ? Indeed, it is difficult to surpass them. They set before us an ideal worthy to be followed even to-day.<sup>6</sup>

There is another fact which brings out the scholarly attitude of Al-Biruni. It was just during the reign of Mahmud that he collected and prepared the materials for the work on India, that is, during the time and at the place of incessant warfare. And yet the author was absolutely unconcerned about this affair.

<sup>6</sup> For some details from this History of India, see my article in Al-Biruni Commemoration Volume.

There is no trace whatsoever of it in the work. "It is", as Sachu aptly remarks, "like a magic island of quiet, impartial research, in the midst of a world of clashing swords, burning towns, and plundered temples." This reminds us of the Greek mathematician who was perturbed at the destruction of his geometrical figures but not at the ravages of war under his very nose.



## THE MINGLING OF THE TWO OCEANS : HINDUISM AND ISLAM

By BIKRAMA JĪT HASRAT

THE *Majma'-ul-Bahrain* or "the Mingling of the Two Oceans" is a small treatise on comparative religion by Dārā Shikūh written in 1065 A. H., corresponding to the forty-second year of the age of the author,<sup>1</sup> two years before he undertook the monumental work, the *Sirr-i-Akbar* or "the Great Secret," a Persian translation of the Upanishads. Though a treatise on the technical terms of Indian pantheism and their equivalents in Ṣūfī phraseology, poor in spirit, largely verbal and devoid of any deep insight or great spirituality, it is a work of utmost interest to a student of comparative religion as it embodies an attempt of its own kind to reconcile the doctrines of two apparently divergent religions. It tries to show the similarity and identity between Hinduism and Islam and brings out the points where the two oceans of religious thought meet.

The absence of the glow of true inspiration, and the poverty of the quality of the text, suggests to John Van Manen,<sup>2</sup> a measure of prudence and caution on the part of the prince, who was later on executed as a heretic on its account, but this matter-of-fact substance and the terminological comparisons, considered with his other pronouncements on his religious belief, do not indicate that he was mindful of the dire consequences. Even in the present work, he gives expression to his sentiments freely. "Mysticism is equality," he observes,<sup>3</sup> "it is abandonment of ( religious ) obligations." At another place, he expresses his own attitude in search of the Truth by voicing what

1 *Majma'-ul-Bahrain* ( Bib., Ind. ). p. 116.

2 *Ibid.* p. vi.

3 *Ibid* p. 80.

Khwāja Ahrār said ; “If I know that an infidel, immersed in sin, is in a way singing the note of monotheism, I go to him, near him and am grateful to him.”<sup>4</sup> Keeping fully in view the nature of the work, it leaves little scope for any doubt on the matter. This is what he himself says : “O my friend, whatever I have recorded... is the outcome of much painstaking and considerable research and is in accordance with my own inspiration, which although you may not have read in any book or heard from anyone, is also in conformity with the two ( given in the context ) verses of the holy *Qur’ān*. Now if this exposition is distasteful to certain worthless fellows, I entertain no fear on that account : *Then surely Allah is Self-sufficient, above any need of the worlds.*”<sup>5</sup>

Much can be said on the points of difference of the religious doctrines of the two and some of the identical enunciations and definitions as given by Dārā Shikūh can be easily refuted by the learned scholars on both sides, as for instance, the Islamic view of *rūh* ( soul ) is fundamentally dissimilar to that of the Vedāntist. The former does not consider the soul as reality or believe in its association and identification with God, and holds that *nafs* (self ) is sharply differentiated from *rūh* (soul), while in the Upanishads, the central doctrine seeks to establish *Ātmān* as the sole reality and the realisation of Brahman as *Ātmān* is emphasised. This and such other points of essential dissimilarity of doctrines are strikingly evident from the *Majma’-ul-Bahrain*, but the real appreciation of the attempt lies in the great human interest shown by Dārā Shikūh, apart from the fundamental divergencies of philosophical speculation, in the identical conception of Divinity, Resurrection, *Mukti* and *Najāt*, *Bahisht* and *Svargaloka*, God’s attributes, the Vision of God, the Divisions of Universe ; a comparison of elements, skies, worlds, airs, senses both internal and external, devotional exercises etc. All these form a very interesting comparative study.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 115.

The *Majma'-ul-Bahrain* marks the beginning of a very commendable effort of a prince that led him towards a deeper and more intimate comprehension of Indian philosophical and religious thought, which produced a few years later, the translations into Persian of the *Gītā*, the *Upanishads* and the *Yoga-Vāsistha*. It also showed that Dārā Shikūh was firmly of the opinion that while living together for centuries, Hindus and Muslims, should not judge each other by vague and superficial notions of each other's religion, but should try to comprehend the essentials of Truth as contained in their respective scriptures.

The Introduction to the treatise is most illuminating. It opens with the assertion that there is no fundamental difference between Hinduism and Islam. Islam and Infidelity (Hinduism) are both galloping on the way towards Him ; both exclaim : *He is One and none shares His sovereignty*.<sup>6</sup> On the unparalleled and matchless face of the Incomparable Lord are the unparalleled locks of Faith ( Islam ) and Infidelity ( Hinduism ) and by neither of them He has covered His beautiful face. This verse of Sanā'ī is given in the opening : "In the name of One, who hath no name ; with whatever name thou callest Him, He uplifteth His head."<sup>7</sup> Proceeding, he observes, that after ascertaining the true religion of the Ṣūfis and obtaining mystic inspiration, he thirsted to know the tenets of the religion of the Indian monotheists. "This unsolicitous *faqīr*, Muhammad Dāra Shikūh, after knowing the truth of truths and ascertaining the secrets and subtleties of the true faith of the mystics," he says, "and having been endowed with this great gift, he longed to know the tenets of the religion of the Indian monotheists and after having the association and discussion with the doctors and perfect divines of this ( Hindu ) religion, who had attained the greatest perfection in religious exercises, comprehension of God, intelligence

6 *Ibid.* p. 1.

7 *Ibid.*

and religious insight, he did not find any difference except verbal, in the way in which they sought to comprehend the Truth.”<sup>8</sup>

It was after having repeated discussions with the perfect divines of Indian religion, he remarks, that he compiled the view of the two parties and having brought together the points of similarity—a knowledge of which is absolutely essential and useful for the seekers of the Truth—he has written a tract and entitled it *Majma‘-ul-Bahrain* or ‘the Mingling of the Two oceans’, for, “it is a collection of the truth and wisdom of the two Truth-knowing groups.” Concluding, he adds that he had to think deeply on the subject. He disregards the commonalty of both the creeds : “While discerning and intelligent persons will derive much pleasure from this tract, the blockheads without insight will get no share of its benefits. I have put down these investigations of mine, according to my own intuition and taste, for the benefit of the members of my family and I have no concern with the common folk of either community.”<sup>9</sup>

The tract is divided into the following twenty-two sections :

1. On the Elements (‘*Anāṣir*’).
2. On the Senses (*Hawās*).
3. On the Devotional Exercises (*Ashghāl*).
4. On the Attributes of God, the Most High (*Ṣifāt-i-Allāh Ta‘ālā*).
5. On the Soul (*Rūh*).
6. On the Air (*Bād*).
7. On the four Worlds (‘*Awālim-i-Arba‘a*’)
8. On Sound (*Awāz*).
9. On Light (*Nūr*).
10. On the Vision of God (*Rūyat*).
11. On the Names of God, the Most High (*Asmā‘i Allāh Ta‘ālā*).
12. On Apostleship and Saintship (*Nubuwwat wa Wilāyat*).
13. On the *Brahmāṇḍa*.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

14. On the Directions (*Jibāt*).
15. On the Skies (*Āsmānha*).
16. On the Earth (*Zamīn*).
17. On the Divisions of the Earth (*Qismāt-i-zamīn*).
18. On the *Baraẓakh*. ( place between Hell and Heaven )
19. On the Resurrection (*Qiyāmat*).
20. On the *Mukti* ( Salvation ).
21. On Day and Night (*Rūz wa Shab*).
22. On the Infinity of the Cycles (*Benihayatī-i-Adwar* ).

According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar<sup>10</sup> and the author of *Siyar-ul-Mutākbirīn*<sup>11</sup> it was *Majma'-ul-Babrain* which brought about the end of the prince. The orthodox historians like the author of *Ālamgīrnama* and others have charged him with relentless zeal for "his free thinking and heretical notions", which made him show an inclination "towards the institutions and religion of the Hindus," whose Brahmans and learned men are characterised by them as "worthless teachers of delusions."<sup>12</sup> Even contemporary European travellers support the view<sup>13</sup> that it was his liberal outlook on the matter of religion and his compilation of "The Mingling of the Two Oceans," a first attempt of its own kind to reconcile the divergent doctrines of *Brahma-vidyā* and *al-Qur'ān*, which procured a decree from the legal advisers of Aurangzeb that Dārā Shikūh had apostatized from law, and, having vilified the religion of God, had allied himself with heresy and infidelity. Consequently, he was executed in the year 1659 A. D.

But judging the attempt of such a compilation, from another point of view, we agree with Dr. Qanungo,<sup>14</sup> that undoubtedly the prince struck an original line of investigation, which if honestly pursued for the sake of neglected commonalty, may achieve great things when the fate of India depends upon a

10 *Aurangzeb*, Vol. II, p. 214.

11 *Vide*, p. 408.

12 *Elliot*, Vol. VII. p. 179.

13 For details, *vide*, Manucci's *Storia de Moger*, Vol. I. ; Bernier's *Travels*, etc.

14 *Dārā Shikūh : a Biography*, Vol. I.

fresh attempt at the mutual comprehension of the two spiritual elements and an appreciative study of her two apparently discordant cultures. Similar attempts were also made in the time of Akbar, when translations of important Hindu scriptures were made into Persian by a band of devoted scholars<sup>15</sup>; and these too did not find favour with the orthodox school, which however was not as powerful as in the days of Aurangzeb. But even then they were not much read except by a few liberal minded Muslims and the Hindu court nobility.

Dārā Shikūh's endeavour to establish by a comparative process that the ideas of Indian cosmogony are similar to those embodied in the Qur'ān are often interpreted as "an irreligious attempt to extol the virtues of Hinduism over Islam," but nothing can be a more unjustifiable perversion of truth than this charge against the prince. It is far from our purpose to defend him, but we can never doubt, even for a moment, the underlying sincerity of purpose in such an attempt, which placed religion on a broader foundation and tended to point out a way to a better comprehension of each other's ideas in a spirit of mutual goodwill. The common bond of uniformity of basic ideals of the Hindus and the Muslims showed to him that the different modes of expression used in both the religions were nothing but the varying phases of one changeless Truth. As against the rather lukewarm and more often niggardly attitude of the Pandits in imparting learning and religious knowledge to others, the unimaginative and fanatical Mullā, forgetting that Islam had an unprecedented record of religious toleration and patronage of learning and sciences, denounced such attempts of an enlightened prince as "startling innovations" and "rank heresy." Unfortunately this spirit of mistrust and religious antagonism, has been much accentuated in recent times, but taking a broader aspect of things, can we assert that living side by side for centuries,

15 For a detailed account of these translations, their origin and history etc. *vide*, Dr. Bikrama Jit Haṣrat : *Muslims and Indian Sciences in the Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. XII-Part IV ( New Series ), pp. 299-314.

both the Hindus and the Muslims in India have left behind an era totally barren of common cultural contributions? Whatever the answer to these questions, Dārā Shikūh did not consider that the two great religions stood apart absolutely irreconcilable. Overlooking the sectarian dogmas and philosophical disputes, there exists to this day a vital bond of cultural unity. Such bonds of Indo-Muslim thought, towards the evolution of which the *Majma'-ul-Bahrain*, though not rich and exuberant in language and style, is a starting point, it is hard for anyone to deny.

Let us now consider some of the subjects dealt with in the *Majma'-ul-Bahrain*<sup>16</sup>:

#### RUH OR ATMAN

Soul is of two kinds: common soul and Soul of Souls ( *Abul Arwāh* ), which is called *Ātman* and *Paramātman*<sup>17</sup> in the phraseology of Indian divines. When the Pure Self ( *Dhāt-i-Bah* ) becomes dominated and fettered, either in respect of purity or impurity, He is known as *rūb* ( soul ) or *ātman* in His elegant aspect, and *jasad* ( body ) or *ṣarīra* in His inelegant aspect. And the self that was determined in the eternity past is known as *Rūb-i-A'zam* ( Superme Soul ) and is said to possess uniform identity with the Omniscient Being. Now the Soul in which all the souls are included is known as *Paramātman* or *Abul Arwāh*. The interrelation between water and its waves is the same as that between body and soul or as that between *ṣarīra* and *Ātman*. The combination of waves, in their complete aspect, may very aptly be likened to *Abul Arwāh* or

16 In all cases, I have followed the text of the *Majma'-ul-Bahrain* ( Bibliotheca Indica, 1929 ) edited by M. Mahfuz-ul-Haq. The work was also translated into Sanskrit under the title of *Samudra-Sahgam* in 1066 A. H. ( 1655 A. D. ), vide. Aufrecht's *Catalogus Catalogorum* and also Govt. Mss. Library, B. O. R. Institute, Poona, No. 1049. An Arabic translation of the same is preserved in the Imperial Library, Calcutta. An Urdu translation was lithographed at Lucknow ( 1872 ).

17 The *Ātman*, in the Rig-Vedic philosophy is a very comprehensive term, but generally it denotes the individual soul as opposed to *Paramātman* or the Universal Soul.

*Parāmatman* ; while water only is just like the August Existence ( *Ḥaḍrat-i-Wajūd* ) or *Suddha* or *Chetana* .

#### CONCEPTION OF SOUND : INDIAN AND ISLAMIC

Sound emanates from the same breath of the Merciful which came out of the word *Kun* or “*B*,” at the time of the creation of the universe. Indian divines call that sound *Sarasvatī*<sup>18</sup>, which they say is the source of all other sounds, voices and vibrations : “Wherever thou hearest, it is His melodious voice ; who has after all heard such a rolling sound ?” According to Indian monotheists, this sound which is called *Nad* is of three<sup>19</sup> kinds. First, *Anāhata*, which has been in Eternity Past, is so at the present and will be so in the future. The Sufis name this sound as *Awaz-i-Mutlaq* or the Absolute Sound or *Sulṭān-ul-Adhkār*<sup>20</sup> i. e. the King of Meditations. This sound is eternal and is also the source of the preception of *Mahākāśa*<sup>21</sup> ; but this sound is inaudible to all except the great saints of both the communities. Second, *Āhata* or the sound which originated from the striking of one thing against another,

18 *Sarasvatī* forms a triad with the sacrificial Goddesses *Iṣā* and *Bhārati* ; in the *Brāhmaṇas*, she is identified with *Vāk* or ‘Speech’, She is also called the goddess of learning and eloquence and is often identified with a celestial or oracular sound.

19 The three-fold sound—physical, physiological and psychic is also described in the *Risāla*’ i *Ḥaq Numa* vide the present writer’s *Saints of the Qādiri Order*, in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, VI, 2, Aug-Oct. 1940, p. 140-41.

20 The devotional exercise, the *Sulṭān-ul-Adhkār*, termed as the ‘Voice of Silence’ has been described by Dārā Shikūh in the *Risāla*, opt. cit. p. 141.

21 The *Mahākāśa* or the Great Ether, is compared by Dārā Shikūh with the ‘*Unṣur-i-A‘zam*’ or the Great Element, through whose medium we hear sounds ( p. 41 ) ; “and it is through the sense of hearing that its real essence is manifested.” At another place, it is described as the ninth sky, encircling all other skies ( p. 64 ). And again the ‘*Unṣur-i-A‘zam*’ or *Mahākāśa* is identified with *Sūkṣma Śarira* or the Elegant body of the Divinity. ( p. 68 ).



without its combinations into words. Third, *Sabda*<sup>22</sup> or the sound which emanates together with its formation into words. *Sabda* possesses an affinity with *Sarasvatī* and is the source of *Ism-i-A'zam* or the Great Name of the Muslims, and *Vedamukha* or *Om* of the Hindus. *Ism-i-A'zam* means that He is the possessor of the three attributes of Creation, Preservation and Destruction. And *Fatḥa*, *Dhamma* and *Kasra*, which correspond to *Akāra*, *Ukāra* and *Makāra*, have also originated from this *Ism-i-A'zam*. The Indian divines assign a special symbol to this sound which bears a close resemblance to our *Ism-i-A'zam*, and in which traces of the elements of water, fire, air and dust and of the Pure Self are manifest.

#### NAMES OF GOD

In the Indian language, the Absolute, the Pure, the Hidden of the hidden and the Necessary Self is known as *Asanga*, *Triguna*, *Nirakara*, *Niranjana* and *Sattva-Chitta*. If knowledge is attributed to Him, the Indian divines designate Him as *Chetana* while the Muslims call Him '*Alīm*. For *al-Haq* they have the word *Ananta*, for *Qādir* they have *Samartha*, for *Samī'* they have *Srota* and for *Baṣīr* they have *Draṣṭa*. If spirit is

22 *Sabda* or sound is associated with the sacred syllable *Aum* (Om) in the *Amrit Upam*. The comparison of *Ism-i-A'zam* with *Aum* is comprehensible in as much as both denote some attributes of the Divinity. Both are very comprehensive terms; the former as generally admitted, is one of the yet undetermined ninety-nine names of God, while the latter, though used in many respects in the Upanishads, appears as a mystic monosyllable, and is there set forth as the object of profound religious meditation, the highest spiritual efficacy being attributed not only to the whole word but also to its three sounds *A*, *U*, *M*, of which it consists. *Ism-i-A'zam* is described above as the possessor of three attributes of creation, preservation and destruction, similarly, *Aum* (Om) is the mystic name of the Indian triad, representing a union of the three gods, viz., *A* (Viśnū), *U* (Śiva) and *M* (Brahman). Other details of comparative interest, with regard to its origin, etymology and various symbolic aspects are given in both the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya* Upanishads. The functions of the above mentioned triad, associated with *Aum* (Om) are explained by Dārā Shikūh in another section (p. 44): "Brahman or Jibrā'il is the angel of creation, Viṣṇu or Mikā'il is the angel of duration of existence and Mahēśvara (Śiva) or Isrā'īl is the angel of destruction."

attributed to that Absolute Self, they call Him *Vyākta* ; *Allāh* they call *Om*, *Hū* they call *Sab* and they designate *farishta* as *deva* in their language. *Wahī* or Divine revelation is known as *Ākaśavanī*, *Maẓhar-i-Ātmām* or Perfect Manifestation is called *Avatāra*. *Rūyat* or Vision of God is called *Sākṣatkāra*.

#### QIYAMAT AND MAHAPRALAYA

Speaking on the Resurrection (*Qiyamat*), he says, that the belief of the Indian monotheist is that after a very long sojourn in Heaven or Hell, the *Mahāpralaya*<sup>28</sup> would take place. This fact is also ascertainable from the holy *Qur'an* : "*And when the Resurrection comes.*" (LXXIX, 34.), and this verse : "*And the trumpet shall be blown, so all those that are in the earth shall swoon, except such as Allah pleases.*" (XXXIX, 68.). The Hindu conception is that after the destruction of heavens and hells, the up-setting of the skies and the completion of the age of the *Brahmāṇḍa*, the occupants of Hell and Heaven will achieve *mukṭi* i. e. both will be absorbed and annihilated in the Self of the Lord, as stated in the holy verse : "*Every one on it must pass away. And there will endure for ever the person of thy Lord, the Lord of glory and honour.*" (LV. 26, 27 ).

#### THE THREE-FOLD MUKTI

*Mukṭi* according to him, is identical with the Islamic conception of Salvation. It denotes the annihilation and disappearances of determinations in the Self of the Lord, as is

28 *Mahāpralaya*, according to *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, is the total annihilation of the universe at the end of a Kalpa. Dārś Shikūh calls it *Qiyāmat-i-Kubra* (p. 40). At another place (p. 74) he observes that the smaller Resurrection or *Qiyāmat-i-Sughra*, known in the Indian phraseology as *Khaṇḍapralaya*, which comes either like the inundation of water or the conflagration of fire or storm," would precede *Mahāpralaya*, which is ordained in the following two verses : *On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth.* (XIX. 48) ; and : "*On the day when we will roll up the heaven like the rolling up of the scroll for writing.*" (XI. 104 ).

evident from the holy verse : "*And the best of all is Allah's goodly pleasure that is the grand achievement*" ( ix. 72. ). The entrance in the *Ridwan-i-Akbar* or the High Paradise is the great Salvation called *Muktī*.

It is three-fold. First, *Jīvanmuktī* or salvation in life, which consists "in the attainment of salvation and freedom, by being endowed with the wealth of knowledge and understanding of the Truth, in seeing and considering everything of this world as one, in ascribing to God and not to oneself, all deeds, actions, movements, behaviour whether good or bad, and in regarding oneself together with all existing objects, as in complete identity with the Truth". Secondly, *Sarvamuktī* or the liberation from every kind of bondage, which consists in the absorption in His Self. This Salvation "is universally true in the case of all living beings, and after the destruction of the sky, the earth, the Paradise, the Hell, the *Brahmāṇḍa* and the day and the night, they will attain Salvation by annihilation in the Self of the Lord. "To this Salvation, is a reference in this verse : *Now surely the friends of Allah, they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve,*" ( x. 62. ). Thirdly, *Sarvadāmuktī* or eternal salvation, which consists in becoming an 'Arif and in attaining freedom and salvation in every stage of ( spiritual ) progress, whether "this advancement is made in the day or in the night, whether in the manifest or the hidden world, whether the *Brahmāṇḍa* appears or not, and whether it takes place in the past, the present or the future." Explaining the mystic significance of the Eternal Salvation, he observes, that wherever the holy *Qur'an* speaks of the Paradise e. g. in : "*Abiding therein for ever.*" ( ix. 22. ), the word 'Paradise' applies to Divine Knowledge and 'for ever' refers to the perpetuity of this *Muktī*, the reason being, that in whatever state one may be, the capacity to know God and to receive eternal favour is necessary. Hence the following two verses give good tidings to such a group of persons as have been ordained to attain *Muktī* : "*Their Lord gives them good news of mercy from Himself and ( His ) good pleasure and gardens, wherein*

*lasting blessings shall be theirs : abiding therein for ever ; surely Allah has a mighty reward with Him. ( IX. 21, 22. ) ; and : "Give good news ( O Prophet ) to the believers who do good that they shall have a goodly reward." ( XVIII. 2, 3. ).*

#### THE FIVE ELEMENTS

In the Discourse on the Elements ( '*Anaṣir* ), the five elements forming the constituents of all mundane creation, as understood in the Islamic phraseology, are compared with those of the Indian conception. First the Great Element ( '*Unṣur-i-A'zam* ) ; second, wind ( *bad* ) ; third, fire ( *Atish* ) ; fourth, water ( *āb* ) and fifth, earth ( *khāk* ) are identical with the *pañcabhūta* ( five elements ) known as *akāśa*, *vayū*, *tejas*, *jala* and *prithvī*.

There are three *akāśas* : *Bhūtakaśa*, which surrounds the elements ; *Mahakaśa* which encircles the whole existence ; and *Cidakaśa*, which is not transient but is permanent and there is no Qur'ānic or Vedic verse to testify to its annihilation and destruction. The first thing to emanate from *Cidakaśa* was love ( '*Ishq* ) which is called *Maya*<sup>24</sup> in the language of the Indian monotheists : and : *I was a hidden treasure, then I desired to be known, so I brought the creation into existence,*" is a proof of this statement. From Love ( '*Ishq* ), *Rūb-i-A'zam* or *Mahatman*,<sup>25</sup> the Great Soul was born, by which is understood a reference to the

24 *Māyā*, according to Indian conception, does not signify '*Ishq*' or Love. In its old sense it may mean 'wisdom', or 'supernatural power' but in the Vedic literature it denotes 'unreality' or 'illusion' or 'supernatural magic', e. g., "Indra in his magic powers ( *māyā* ) goes about in many forms", ( *Bṛih. Upan. II, 5, 19.* ). In the *Rig-Veda*, the word occurs in the meaning of supernatural powers or artifices. It is this thought which is developed into the theory of cosmic illusion and can be roughly compared to '*Ishq*' if taken as illusion identified in the Samkhya with *prakṛiti* and the later Vedānta doctrine of *Māyā*, in which it is regarded as the source of the visible universe and the inevitable illusoriness of all human cognition. The theory of cosmic illusion of the later *Māyā* doctrine is best expressed in the *Śvet. Upan. IV 9-10*.

25 The text reads *jīvātman* ( living soul ).

soul of the Prophet and to the "complete soul" of Muhammad. The Indian monotheists call it *Hiranyagarbha*.<sup>26</sup>

#### SENSES : INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMPARED

Similarly, he says, that the five senses—*Shamma* ( smelling ) *Dha'iqā* ( tasting ), *Baṣira* ( seeing ), *Samī'a* ( hearing ) and *Lamisa* ( touching ) are the *Pañcendriyani* of Indian conception, which are called *ghrana* ( nose ), *rasana* ( tongue ), *cakṣu* ( eye ), *śrota* ( ear ) and *tvak* ( skin ), with their qualities known as *gandha*, *rasa*, *rūpa*, *śabda* and *sparsa*. The description of the relative qualities of the senses and their association with the elements is of much interest. The sense of smell is allied with dust, for the reason, that none of the elements except dust possesses smell which is perceived by *Shamma*. *Dha'iqā* is connected with water, for the taste of water is perceived by the tongue ; *Baṣira* is connected with fire, for, colour is perceived by the eye only, while luminosity is present in both. *Lamisa* is connected with the 'Unṣur-i-A'zam or *Mahakaśa*, through whose instrumentality we hear sounds. It is through the sense of hearing that the real essence of *Mahakaśa* is manifested to the religious devotees, while no one else can realise it. Such exercise is common to the Sufis and the Indian monotheists ; the former call it *Shaghl-i-Pas-i-Anfas*<sup>27</sup> or the

26 *Hiranyagarbha* is translated by Dārā Shikūh as *Majmua* ' i ' *Unṣur-i-Bāṣit* in the *Sirr-i-Akbar* ( Fol. 11b and 136a ). It is the name of the Brahman *lit.* golden foetus, so called as born from a golden egg out of the seed deposited in the waters, when produced as the first-creation of the Self-existent : " Who of old created the Golden Germ ( *Hiranyagarbha* ) " *Śvet. Upan.* III, 8, 3, and in the *Rig Veda* ( X, 121, I ) :

" In the beginning arose *Hiranyagarbha*,

The earth's begetter, who created heavens."

According to Manu ( I, 9. ) this seed became a golden egg, resplendent as the sun in which Brahman was born as Creator, who is therefore regarded as a manifestation of the Self-existent. The comparison of *Rūh-i-A'zam* with *Hiranyagarbha* as the complete soul of the Prophet Muḥammad, is very far-fetched.

27 For details of these and other physical exercises, *vide.* the present writer's : *Dārā Shikūh in the Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, V, 4, 870 p. April 1940 and VI, 2, p. 140. Oct. 1940.

Exercise of Controlling of the Breath, while the latter call it *Dhyana* in their own phraseology.

Then there is the comparison of internal senses, which according to Islamic conception are five *Mushtarak* or common, *Mutakhayyila* or imaginary, *Mutafakkira* or contemplative, *Hafiza* or retentive and *Wahima* or fanciful. In the Indian system, however, these are four-<sup>8</sup> in number, viz., *Buddhi*,<sup>29</sup> *Manas*,<sup>30</sup> *Ahamkara*<sup>31</sup> and *Citta*,<sup>32</sup> a combination of which is called *Antahkarana*,<sup>33</sup> and this in turn may be looked upon as the fifth.

28 According to *Māṇḍ Upan.* (3), the senses are three-fold: (1) Five organs of sense ( *Buddhānūriyāni* ) i.e., those of hearing, touch, sight, taste or smell; (2) five organs of action ( *Kāramendriya* ) viz. those of speech handling, locomotion, generation and execution; and (3) five vital breaths—the ( *prāṇa* ), the sensorium ( *manas* ) the intellect ( *buddhi* ), egoism ( *ahamkāra* ) and thinking ( *citta* ). *Buddhi* is described as the five-fold preception and the original source of vital breaths.

29 *Buddhi* or intellect, which is described by Dārā Shikuh as “understanding, which possesses the characteristics of moving towards good and evil” is more than that. In the *Kaṭha Upan.* ( III. 10. ) it is higher than mind ( *manas* ) and again ( III. 8. ) : ‘Know thou that intellect ( *buddhi* ) as the chariot-driver and mind ( *manas* ) as the reins’

30 *Manas* or mind, explained as “possessing the two characteristics of *samkalpa* (determination) and *vikalpa* (abandonment or doubt). “In the *Kena Upan.* ( IV. 5. ) : “that which they say *manas* is thought.” And in the *Kaṭha Upan.* ( III. 10. ) it is said to be higher than objects of sense.

31 *Ahamkāra* or egoism or self-consciousness—which attributes things to itself, is one of the qualities of *Paramātmān*, for the reason that it possesses *māyā*. More details are given by Dārā Shikuh with regard to the three-fold *Ahamkāra* viz.; *Ahamkāra-Sattva* or *Jñānasvarūpa*, which is the ‘high stage of *Paramātmān* when he says: ‘Whatever there is, is I.’ Such is the stage of complete encircling of everything: ‘Now surely I encompass everything:’ ( *Qur’ān*, XLI. 54. ) (2) *Ahamkāra-Rajas* or *Madhyama*, which is the middle stage, when the neophyte says: ‘My self is free from the limitations of body and elements.’ (3) *Ahamkāra-Tamas* or the Servitude to the August Self.”

32 *Citta* or thought, is described by Dārā Shikuh as ‘the messenger of mind and ...which does not possess the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong’. See also the *Chānd. Upan.* ( VIII. 5, 1. ).

33 *Antahkarana*, the internal organ of mind and the seat of thought.

## THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

A comparison of some of the attributes of God is most striking. According to the Sufis, there are two Divine attributes of *Jamāl* or Beauty and *Jalāl* or Majesty, which encircle the whole creation ; while according to Indian devotees, there are three attributes of God collectively known as *Triguna*<sup>84</sup> or *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*,<sup>85</sup> denoting creation, duration and destruction respectively. But as these attributes are included in one another, Indian mystics name them *Trimūrti* : Brahman, Viśṇu and Maheśvara, who are identical with Jibra'il Mīkā'il and Isrā'il. Brahman or Jibra'il is the angel of creation, Viśṇu or Mikā'il is the angel of duration or existence, and Maheśvara or Isrā'il is the angel of destruction.

The description of these three Divine attributes is more vivid. The *Triṇa* is manifested through Brahman, Viśṇu and Maheśvara<sup>86</sup> whose attributes are in turn, manifested in all the creation of the universe. Thus when a person is born, he lives for an apportioned period and then is annihilated. The potential power of these attributes is called *Tridevī*. Now *Trimūrti* gives birth to Brahman, Viśṇu and Maheśvara, while *Tridevī* was the mother of Sarasvatī, Parvatī and Lakṣmī who are connected with *Rajoguna*, *Tamoguna* and *Sattvaguna* respectively.

84 That which possesses three ( *tri* ) qualities ( *guṇa* ). In the *Sirr-i-Akbar*, *Triguna* is translated as *Sih Sifat*. In some remote way the comparison of *Jalāl* and *Jamāl* with the collective *Triguna* ( *rajas* , *tamas* and *sattva* ) may be plausible. *Sattva* may be more appropriately compared with the *sifat Kamāl*. According to Indian thought, those three attributes indicate a progressive differentiation of Supreme Soul. First, there was nothing but Darkness ( *tamas* ) in the world. When impelled by the Supreme, it goes on to differentiation. That form becomes Passion ( *rajas* ), which, in turn, when impelled goes on to further differentiation. That form becomes Purity ( *sattva* ).

85. The *Maitri Upan.* ( III. 5. ) gives a very vivid description of the characteristics of *rajas* and *tamas*.

86. In the *Maitri Upan.* ( IV. 2. ), it is thus : "That part of Him, which is characterised by Darkness ( *tamas* ) is Rudra ; that part of Him, which is characterised by Passion ( *rajas* ) is Brahman ; and that part of Him, which is characterised by Purity ( *sattva* ) is Viśṇu.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS, BOOK NOTES

*Incidents of Gandhiji's Life.* By Fiftyfour Contributors. Ed. by CHANDRA-SHANKER SHUKLA. Vora & Co., Bombay. Rs. 10-8-0.

Planned while Gandhiji was alive, but produced after his passing away, this is a valuable collection of accounts of first-hand experiences of the Master by a wide array of friends and followers who had come into intimate contact with him. The venture had earned his blessings as the record was to be confined to a bare narration of incidents, without deliberate eulogy or panegyric. Appreciation and admiration are undoubtedly there, but it is the incidents themselves that evoke them, not the set purpose of the writers. These latter form a very varied and mixed collection: the Mahatma's co-workers in S. Africa, distinguished friends and visitors from all parts of the world, leading lights of the Indian national movement and humble followers. The editor has successfully carried through a great labour of love and devotion in securing such a variety of contributions. He himself contributes a very informative chapter on "How some of his ( Gandhiji's ) decisions were made", throwing light on some of the crucial and much-misunderstood incidents in that great career.

The cumulative impression left by this rich sheaf of Gandhi anecdotes is of a very great and very human personality—one very much more than a great political leader. These reminiscences reveal, as an English contributor says of his own impressions, "not the great leader but the kindly friend—the man who could always somehow find time, no matter how occupied with important affairs, to attend to the smallest needs of the most insignificant member of his household". Gandhiji's humour, his tolerance, his humanity, are all brought out again and again through little incidents cherished for all time by those privileged to be participants in them. The book conveys some idea of the secret of Gandhiji's hold upon his immense following, in his own country as well as all over the world. He had the enviable capacity of not only drawing people but of keeping them with him. The testimony of this cross-section of his friends and followers tells us how he achieved that.

Shri Shukla is editing a whole series of such sidelights on the life and work of the Mahatma, and they will form a valuable supplement to Gandhiji's autobiography and the innumerable biographies that will be written of the Great Soul.

S. K. G



*Thus Spake Mahatma* : VICHARA SAHITYA LTD., Bangalore. Price : Eight Annas.

This is a good collection of the sayings of the Mahatma, put together in an attractively-bound, tiny pocket-book of 100 pages. The selections cover a wide range of the Mahatma's interests and are topically arranged. They show a discernment of what is essential and abiding in the master's sayings and can form a helpful companion on travels and during lonely meditations. Perhaps the devotional use intended ruled out the idea of putting in references to quotations. That would have been useful to those who desire to check up particular passages or to follow them up with a systematic study of the Mahatma's ideas. It is to be regretted that there are occasional slips in spelling and in the finer points of language for which the originals cannot be responsible. The title would have been definitely better with the insertion of the definite article before "Mahatma".

S. K. G

*Nai Talim Sevagram*. Published by Silpi Corporation Ltd. Madras for Hindusthani Talimi Sangh, Wardha. Rs. 3-0-0.

The brochure under review is a collection of 39 photoplates with explanatory notes together with a preface by E. W. Aryanayakam, Secretary Hindusthani Talimi Sangh, Sevagram.

In the preface Sri Aryanayakam has explained the significance of *Nai Talim* and has given a description of its working at Sevagram. The preface, coming as it does from the pen of a person who can speak with authority, is brief but illuminating.

*Nai Talim*, which means New Education, is one of the most valuable legacies that Gandhiji has bequeathed to the nation. The ultimate objective before this education, in Gandhiji's words, is "a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between the 'haves' and the 'havenots' and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom." In this sense education covers the entire field of life and also its entire span. *Nai Talim*, therefore is education for life and through life.

Many will readily approve of the idea of education being rooted in life and drawing its sustenance therefrom, but many more will feel rather sceptic about the possibility of realising this objective. Both the pen-picture and the photoplates in this book give us a glimpse of how the plan of this silent social revolution can be realised at different stages in action. The photos illustrate how through this New Education expectant mothers,

infants, children, youth and adults receive training in New Citizenship so that they may lay the foundations of a social order based on truth, non-violence and self-sufficiency—the society of Gandhiji's dreams.

The photoplates will also help to root out a general mis-conception regarding the place of Art, Music and Games in Nai Talim. It is generally believed that aesthetic and recreative aspects of education are totally ignored in the scheme; it will be found from the pictures that they occupy a very important place in the educational programme of Nai Talim.

Nai Talim has also been vehemently criticised as exploiting child labour, because one of its most important centres of education is productive work. Critics have imagined relentless teachers yoking unwilling children to forced labour. But the photos give us a different story. They do unmistakably indicate that children do their work with rapt attention and unmixed joy when they face real problems of life and feel the educational community to be their own.

Printed on art paper, the get up of the booklet is extremely pleasing and some of the photos are excellent. The arrangement of the material seems to be slightly haphazard and there is room for improvement there.

Anil Mohan Gupta.

*Swaraj for the Masses.* By J. C. KUMARAPPA. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 104 pp. Rs. 1-12-0.

This is a collection of twenty-four essays from Sri J. C. Kumarappa's pen with a biographical note at the end of the book. Twenty of these essays originally appeared in the *Gram Udyog Patrika* and the remaining four in the *Harijan*. The author, explaining the reason for bringing out the essays in book-form says: "Those who read the articles as they appeared may not have obtained a coherent conception of the ideology behind them because of the long intervals between their publication." The articles are arranged under five heads. The first section deals critically with the conditions as they are. The second suggests the principles that should be borne in mind in evolving an economy that will benefit the masses. The third section deals with constructive ideals in their relation to agriculture. The fourth deals with our cattle wealth, the fifth with industries and the concluding portions give the picture of a plan that will bring solace to the village dweller.

Judging by the norm of "the good bestowed on the masses," the author shows that the conditions have deteriorated since we have taken the reins of government into our own hands,

The author has selected certain examples at random to show that though the Governments, both at the Centre and in the Provinces, have unequivocally declared their intentions to improve the lot of the villagers, they have singularly failed and have dragged them to the threshold of starvation and death. The foreign trade policy of the British Government suited their own purpose. It was meant for making the Englishman rich and keeping the Indian below subsistence level. This suicidal policy is still being followed. The foreign rulers wanted to divide our house against ourselves. They pampered a section to kick the other. We are doing the same thing. With taxes collected mainly from the poor we construct fine roads which are meant for motor cars where the poor tax-payers' bullock carts are forbidden. We make huge paper plans at enormous costs which go to fatten the already fat pockets of the intelligentsia when our people do not get two square meals. When food is scarce we use money as a bait and force the poor farmer to cultivate tobacco for cigars and raw materials for mills. Using money as a 'lever for exploitation' we drain the villages of their essential commodities through our co-operatives. Thus when the table of the rich overflows with milk and honey, the villager, with the hardearned money in his pocket, struggles in the grip of starvation and nakedness.

The examples chosen by the author not only illustrate isolated facts but also point the direction in which the wind blows. In every field lack of clear thinking is landing us on paradoxes. The author pleads that rural development should not be trifled with because it is in these villages that India resides. If we are serious about village welfare, he argues, we must think of the village as an entity in itself and not as a mere source of raw materials or a consumer of finished goods manufactured in towns. As agriculture is the occupation of 90% of our villagers all our rural development schemes should centre round the farmer and agriculture. The village should be made a self-sufficient unit and external trade should be restricted to proved surplus. This will make the village strong, the author concludes, and make co-operation real.

Our inability to bring Swaraj to the masses, the author contends, is due to the fact that we have pledged ourselves to maintain the continuity of a regime that we have found, from centuries of bitter experience, to be detrimental to our national interests. That regime is based on competitive economics that "brings us to the jungle law of the survival of the fittest and the weakest to the wall." Instead, according to the author, if we really desire the welfare of the masses, we should follow the message of the Khadi, which does not only mean hand-spun yarn and hand-woven cloth

but stands also for "an economic order based on self-sufficiency and co-operation wherein production is for use or consumption and not for exchange." In this social order "the weakest get greater care and consideration, and the satisfaction of our primary needs is given priority over production for exchange."

The book is not a systematic treatise on economics and many vexed questions of economics have been left out. But the book serves its own purpose by pointing out the undeniable paradoxes and by provoking thought. The author has insight and has given us a peoples' picture of the conditions around us. There is no denying the fact that we have failed so far in improving the lot of the villager and the portents of an internecine strife is distressingly evident. It is time that we paused and pondered and with a clear ideology before us marched firmly onward. Sri Kumarappa's searching analysis and forthright suggestions will at least help us in keeping the real problem prominently before our eyes, even though the actual solution may ultimately come along different channels.

Anil Mohan Gupta.

*So Many Hungers!*: BHABANI BHATTACHARYA. Hind Kitabs, Bombay. Rs. 7-8-0.

A glowing array of pictures—rich, vivid and clear-cut—that is what *So Many Hungers!* appeared to me at first. Vignettes of life from almost all angles—snapshots of both metropolitan Calcutta, of its busy, pulsating life, its tall mansions, its glitter and pomp, its shamelessness and its cruelty—and of rural Baruni, that sea-side village of Bengal, where moons wax and wane, flowers bloom and fade and Earth, that green-tressed goddess, alters her raiment off and on for the pleasure of her contented and simple children. Here life goes on along the old grooves of tradition, the air is heavy with the smell of paddy, the field is loud with the lowing of the cattle, and there is contentment, there is joy, there is abundance in this sweet Auburn of Bengal. But the war-drums throbbed and a darkness came upon both the city and the village and hid the mile-stones from sight.

The characters are many—but most of them are alive at Bhabani Bhattacharya's hand. Meet Samarendra Rose, to whom the war is a veritable windfall, his wife, calm, placid and devoted to her sons and husband; then there is his eldest son Rahoul, a Cambridge D. Sc., a University Professor, carrying on research in Cosmic Rays, later on turning a social worker because of the basic claims of his starving fellow-beings;

his wife Monju, who sets out in the beginning of the story, to make her handsome person more attractive with rouge, with powder and with gaudy silk and who is all agog for a dance in a fashionable European-styled restaurant of Calcutta, but towards the close of the book, she undergoes a metamorphosis and in her black, and large eyes, edged with collyrium, there flashes the promethean fire of resolution, steadfast purpose. She is now no longer, as she naively tells us, the silly thing that she used to be. ....

We should not, of course, forget Kajoli, the embryonic Marty South of Bengal, suddenly become conscious of her womanhood—a daughter of the earth, with the earth's mellowness, the earth's exuberance and rich yielding. Look at this picture of Onu : "A boy of ten came up the pathway. He cast a wondering look at the stranger. Onu wore white clothes, a short homespun dhoti, sleeveless vest. "Good shoes," said Grandfather, tenderness in his voice, "you are pleased, Onu ?" For answer the boy lifted his feet and walked ten paces ahead. 'Listen, *mush-mush* !' and he walked back with firm steps. 'What *mush-mush*, Dadu', his eyes beamed with excited pleasure." ( p. 33 )

And on this : "The big boy hesitated for a time, clutching the jam tin light, gazing down at it, then with a sigh he looked up and held out the treasure. 'Lick this side, the other side is for my mouth. Lick.... Onu licked.'" ( p. 235 )

And then before you take leave, bow down before the *Devata* and let his eyes, deep with compassion rest long upon your face as though pouring upon you some speechless blessing.

*So Many Hungers !* is a moving tale, brilliantly told of the sufferings and hardships of Bengal during the dark war-years when famine stalked through the land and millions died. An epic of the war years, in *So Many Hungers !* we have an account of the greeds, the vices, the weaknesses that manifested themselves through our fellow-beings in the time of the breaking of the nations. A symbol of this inferno is Sir Lakshmpati, a leering debauch, a big businessman, battenning on the black market ; here are also the myriad agents of the Evil Thing. Here is pathos, callous disregard of all codes of civilized humanity, here is the jingle of coins and the debasement of the Soul, the defilement of the body,—a picture of a mad world in which vice and self-interest were so flauntingly successful, corruption so universally prevalent. Here are innumerable famished figures—euphemistically called destitutes—who are lured to the city by hopes of comfort, visions of food but being disappointed are like silhouettes, hollow phantoms moving mistily in a background of colour, warmth and fragrance.

But there are moments when these destitutes rise above their bodily

infirmities and show a hidden core of sympathy, nobility and heroism, moments when sordidness and meanness vanish like a thing reprovèd and the latent heroism of humanity comes into play. We get a glimpse of the ineffable splendour of the human heart and comfort steals over us when we try to fathom the passionless calm of the human soul made holy by the touch of God.

*So Many Hungers!* has been a felicitous name for the novel under review. Its theme is not merely the crude hunger of the body—there is a note of hope, a voice of sincere optimism which sometimes almost hushes the dark, desolate anguish of the Great Hunger—but also the “many hungers that move men and women the world over”—

I know, I know, beloved,

Not in this life will hungers be sated—

I know, I know, beloved !”

There is the eternal hunger of women for home, man has a hunger that he look tall in the eyes of his kin and brethren, the hunger of the patient scientist looking steadfastly at the stars for earths whose untapped secrets he sought, the hunger which Sir Lakshmipati feels for cuddling girls, the spirit's ineluctable struggle for freedom, the Soul's ceaseless striving after the Ultimate—these are the themes which charm you when you read this book.

Bhabani Bhattacharya has done something quite remarkable—he has embalmed in the pages of his novel the fleeting memory of the hideous war years in all its sordidness, in all its flamboyant hues, in all its shadow and shimmer, for all time to come. Yes, it is, as the blurb modestly tells, “One of the finest pieces of creative writing, born out of the agonised torment of body and spirit endured by this ancient land during the early years of the last World War.”

Dilip Kumar Sen.

*The Poet of Hindusthan.* By ANTHONY ELENJIMITAM. Orient Book Company, Calcutta 12. 119 pp. Rs. 5-0-0.

A bizarre book, the volume under review forms part of the author's ambitious Hindusthan trilogy where he tries to “depict the comprehensive and panoramic scenes of Indian Culture and rebirth”. The first book in the series is on Subhas Chandra Bose ; the second book, which is before me, has for its central figure Rabindranath ‘the greatest philosopher-poet and prophet-seer of modern India’ and the third ‘*Hindusthan Hamara*’—or *Our India* is in the offing.

The volume reveals, the Foreword claims, 'the workings of a reflective mind on the problems of religion.' Yes, it is undoubtedly an expression of sincerely-felt religious experiences. The author does not feel at home in any of the organised religions though he is aware of the essential need of religion—and in this book he reaches out after a synthetic pattern of religion 'which cuts across racial, national and dogmatic frontiers.' This earnest religious conviction coupled with the author's intensely sincere approach to the subject lends to the book an almost mystical tone.

But one wonders what all this 'ineluctable mystery' has to do with Rabindranath. The book purports to be an account of Rabindranath's sojourn in the University towns of Oxford and Cambridge and sets forth through the addresses he delivered there the poet's observations on the 'nature and destiny of man on earth, on the historical and mystical side of human life and on the spirit of Eastern and Western Civilizations.'

The remarks may be sound and reasonable but the title of the book is obviously a misnomer, as the reader has an uncomfortable feeling that Rabindranath here serves as a hobby-horse under the shadow of which the author shoots forth his own observations.

The songs with which the book is interspersed are amusing. These, the author frankly tells us in the Dedication, are his own and have been put into the poet's mouth. Some of these songs often tend to be pathetic, as for example :

'Even if you were to be in a lonely spot,  
With a lonely (*sic.*) bathing beauty staring at you with love !  
( p. 94 ).

The book is very carelessly printed on thick paper. The get-up is nice and the price reasonable.

Dilip Kumar Sen.

*The Light Above The Clouds* : By ADI K. SETT. With a Foreword by Verrier Elwin. Thacker & Co. Ltd., Rampart Row, Bombay. 60 pp. Rs. 5-0-0.

The 'gradual replacement of English as a language of the court, culture and commerce raises an interesting issue : What will happen to the great volume of Indo-Anglian literature that has grown and developed and flourished on the hospitable soil of India ? Will it die of neglect and inanition, or will it survive the ravages of time and be kept alive as a vehicle of expression to converse with the larger world of literature in which English has undoubtedly won its rightful place on its own intrinsic merits ?

Such publications as the one under review, serve not only to confront the literary historian of the future with this interesting speculation ; they act also as a challenge to those 'Vernacula-rists' who would drink of no other well except of the well of mother-tongue 'undefiled'. After all, one can hardly deny that English has been a kind of stepmother-tongue of the cultured sections of India for more than a century. As Verrier Elwin has said, Indo-Anglian literature has passed through its first two stages of Imitation and Indianization and has now reached a stage where it has become Individual. Not only so, after the August deliverance it has also become largely a matter of individual choice to write or not to write in an alien tongue.

The author of this slender volume of thirty-nine poems stands on a different footing, however. There is something genuinely English about the texture and spirit of his poetry and although he introduces a native word here and there ( in italics ) to give local colour, he may well be taken to be one writing home-thoughts from abroad. We do not find the real India in these Indo-Anglian verses, except in stray pieces like *What will you bring from the fair ?* This, to our mind, is a lack which must be filled if Indo-Anglian poetry is to survive. The poet in a resurgent and free India can no longer afford to mope in his ivory tower of isolation. He has to write of the people and for the people and thus become worthy of the invocation that Rabindranath has left behind for 'the Poet of the Earth, of the peasant, the comrade', who will 'sing of the obscure man, and reveal to light his unspoken soul'. Indo-Anglian poetry of the future can claim its survival if only it can become revelatory and interpretative of this vast country and its people.

Judged as poetry in the conventional sense, it must be admitted that some of Adi K. Sett's poems deserve to rank quite high in an anthology of Indo-Anglian verse. In spite of the general impression of dilettantism which is inescapable, one gets occasional glimpses in his poems of tender wistfulness and a sensitiveness to the beauty and vanity of things, with surprising bursts of vigour and passion. A characteristic of his love-poems is the way the poet mourns over the days that are no more. In the words of Elwin, "He is full of memories which carry him on drowsy wings of dream to the light above the clouds." Perhaps, in these few words the anthropologist has summed up the poet, and incidentally explained the title of the book, much better than any critic ever could.



*The Far Ascent.* By V. N. BHUSHAN. Padma Publications Ltd., Bombay. 54 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.

This is the eighth collection of Professor Bhushan's poems published so far. As the title signifies, all the poems are highly idealistic in temper, expressing as they do in varied keys a dominating sentiment of aspiration towards a higher level of existence. That the *Far Ascent* is not merely a matter of poetic fancy but the symbol of an actual urge in the poet's life is quite evident. He derives his strength from a genuine faith and optimism which have luckily escaped or avoided serious contradiction. The poems are full of colourful images and sensuous forms, which, however, tend to repeat themselves rather too frequently. The poet shows a power of coining new epithets which are often effective. The themes of some of the more ambitious poems are either too general or commonplace. The poems that appeal to us most are those that deal with particular situations, like Diwali, which indeed is a tender and lovable poem. The influence of Rabindranath Tagore is perceptible here and there, but that of course, is no discredit. Prof. Bhushan is undoubtedly possessed of a lyrical felicity of expression, and we are sure he knows the dangers of eloquence, of an enthusiasm that tends to over-reach the core of poetic truth to which it should completely subordinate itself.

The book is very decently got up except for the picture on the cover which rather crudely illustrates the title. To thirty-two pages of poetry have been appended ten pages of appreciations and press opinions regarding the poet's earlier works,

Sunilchandra Sarkar.

*I Write As I Feel.* By K. AHMAD ABBAS. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 340 pp. Rs. 4-12-0.

This is a collection of the feature articles contributed every week by the writer to *The Bombay Chronicle* between June, 1941 and August 15th., 1947. An attempt has been made in these articles to present the 'many-sided picture of India and the World' during the above-named period. "I have been", says the writer in the preface, "what may be described as a 'subjective reporter', concerned not so much with collecting objective news but with 'chronicling', the emotional, 'human', background of news." It may at once be said that the writer has realised his aim with outstanding success. No doubt he remains pre-eminently a journalist all through and never fails to come out with the right word and the most appropriate sentiment to suit an occasion. But what is remarkable and what invests the writings with a lasting interest is the richness of a balanced, sensitive mind, generous in its sympathies but discriminating in its judgments.

Sunilchandra Sarkar.

*Blood and Stones.* By K. AHMAD ABBAS. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 48. pp. Re. 1-0-0.

Communal riots in the city of Bombay form the milieu of the story. The author's chief interest is to give a telling description of the degeneration even of cultured men and the quick deterioration of all human and social values. Nirmal, the central figure, serves as his mouthpiece. A visit to Ajanta, which has nothing to do with the story, enables Nirmal to bring into contrast the two polar aspects of life : creative aspiration and destructive savagery. Indeed the book is a plea for the former way of life—an eloquent plea one may say. The story has been requisitioned to carry the appeal to educated but thoughtless men and women.

Sunilchandra Sarkar.

*Gita Govinda* : Rendered from the Sanskrit and illustrated by GEORGE KEYT. Kutub Publishers, Bombay. 103 pp. Rs. 5-8-0.

In the Translator's Note, he says that he has tried to 'give a rough idea of the rhythm of the songs, as much, that is, as, English syllables will permit.' We quote a verse to show how this has been done. The famous Sanskrit verse has been rendered :

ललितलवङ्गलतापरिशीलनकोमलमलयसमीरे

'In spring when tender Malayan breezes fondle the beautiful creepers of clove.' Of course we do not blame the translator, because the rhythm, cadence and rich assonances of Sanskrit verse cannot possibly be translated. We cannot say that the meaning of the original phrases has everywhere been faithfully interpreted. Yet on the whole the verses are pleasant to read and likely to convey to English-speaking readers something of the beauty of Jayadeva's theme and thought, but nothing of his art and poetic mood, which he enshrined in the rhythm and mellifluous music of his verses. We hope, however, that the author will succeed in rousing the curiosity of some of his readers and getting them interested in Jayadeva and his poetry. The Translator's Note shows that he is genuinely interested in the Poet he has chosen to translate. He is quite right when he says ; 'The physical aspect here is not something distinct from the spiritual' ; but one wonders how far this high ideal has been borne out by the illustrations done by the translator himself.

Sunilchandra Sarkar.

## BOOK RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

- Phases of Religion and Culture.* By C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 118 pp. Rs. 2-0-0.
- New Frontiers of Psychology.* By NICHOLAS DE VORE. Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York 46, N. Y. 143 pp. \$ 3. 00.
- A Handbook of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.* By RASVIHARY DAS. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 238 pp. Rs. 5-8-0.
- Banking, Planning and Constitution-Making.* By K. T. SHAH. Vora & Co., Publishers, Ltd., Bombay 2. 113 pp. Rs. 4-8-0.
- A Layman looks at the Constitution of India.* Pub. Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy, 111 West 42nd Street, New York 18, N. Y. Distributors, N. M. Tripathi Ltd., Princess Street, Bombay 2. 43 pp. Rs. 2-0-0.
- Bodily Reactions & Examination of Systems of Therapeutics.* By K. L. DAFTARI. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 235 pp. Rs. 5-8-0.
- A Handbook of Town-planning.* By S. C. OAK. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 140 pp. Rs. 7-8-0.
- Manavasristi Vijnanam : The Genesis of the Human Race.* By KOTA VENKATACHALAM. Published by the author from Gandhinagar, Vijayawada. Buckinghampet, Kistna Dt. 92 pp. Rs. 1-8-0.
- Kashmir Folk Tales.* By SOMNATH DHAR. Illustrated by Prabhas Sen. Foreword by Rameshwari Nehru. Hind Kitabs, Bombay. 67 pp. Rs. 2-0-0.
- Padārtha Vidya ( in Bengali ).* By KRISHNAPADA GHOSE and SUDHANSU-KUMAR MAITRA. Ghose & Co., 12/1 Bankim Chatterji Street, Calcutta 12. 504 pp. Rs. 6-0-0.
- The Synthesis of Yoga.* By SRI AUROBINDO. Sri Aurobindo Library, 369 Esplanade, George Town, Madras 1. 283 pp. Rs. 7-8-0.
- Letters of Sri Aurobindo ( Second Series ).* Sri Aurobindo Circle, 32 Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay 1. 599 pp. Rs. 8-0-0.
- More Lights on Yoga.* By SRI AUROBINDO. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Rs. 2-8-0.
- Prayers and Meditations of the Mother.* Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. 296 pp. Rs. 4-0-0.
- The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo ( Part V ).* By NOLINIKANTA GUPTA. Sri Aurobindo Library, 369 Esplanade, Madras 1. pp. 82. Rs. 1-8-0.
- Message of Sri Aurobindo & the Mother.* Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. 29 pp. Rs. 0-10-0.
- Light of Asia and The Indian Song of Songs.* Tr. SIR EDWIN ARNOLD. Jaico Publishing House, Bombay. 229 pp. Price not mentioned.
- Panchatantra.* Tr. ARTHUR W. RYDER. Jaico Publishing House, Bombay. 403 pp. Price not mentioned.

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## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By PRASANTA CHANDRA MAHALANOBIS

IT WAS MY GOOD FORTUNE FOR MORE THAN thirty years to have seen the Poet from very near. It lies on me to speak of what I had seen. Let the memory of what I saw prevent me from the excesses of my own words and lend my speech dignity.

We all know that many a lofty ideal can be found in the Poet's works. But only those of us who were lucky enough to come near him know how real all those ideas were in the Poet's actual life. Today he is far away and one thinks all the more of the deep unity between his writing and his own conversation, his laughter, all the little details of his daily life. That we have apprehended the full beauty of Tagore's *oeuvre* in his own life : that is our great good fortune. His work is a stupendous affair, a thing for rapt and long contemplation. Today I only bear witness to the great and wonderful life I have seen.

### THE VISUAL WORLD

Very early in his life, the Poet came to know the hymns of the Upanishads. These hymns formed the rock of his life. That is why we find in his *sadhana* the tranquility and the solemnity of the Upanishads. There is no excess there. I had heard from him that in the early days he used to incant the *Gayatri Mantram*, but later on the words for his meditation were simply *Santam*, *Sivam*, *Advaitam* ( the calm, the benevolent, the undivided ).

In his life, too, his path was always straight and simple. He wrote once in a letter :



To me religion is too concrete a thing, though I have no right to speak about it. But if ever I have somehow come to realise God, or if the vision of God has ever been granted to me, I must have received the vision through this world, through men, through trees and birds and beasts, the dust and the soil . . . I feel His touch in the sky, in the air, in water ; everywhere I feel it. There are times when the whole world speaks to me.

Again and again he sang of this :

My heart sings at the wonder of my place  
in this world of light and life;  
at the feel in my pulse of the rhythm of creation  
cadenced by the swing of endless time.  
I feel the tenderness of the grass in my forest walk ;  
the wayside flowers startle me :  
that the gifts of the infinite are strewn in the dust  
wakens my song in wonder.  
I have seen, have heard, have lived;  
in the depth of the known have felt truth  
that exceeds all knowledge, which fills  
my heart with wonder and I sing.

Again and again he declared :

Once again I wake up when the night has waned,  
When the world opens all its petals once more ; and this is an  
endless wonder.

Perhaps it was only the sunlight on the leaves and he would sing out :

How one likes the light dancing from leaf to leaf.

In May or June, whether in Calcutta or Bolpur, even in the burning heat and glare of the midday, he would never shut the doors and windows. I had also seen him with windows open to the monsoon so that, as the song goes, 'the sweet smell of the rain', might come freely in windy gusts. When young, he would saunter forth against the stormy wind on the open Bolpur fields with *kalwaisakhi* clouds darkening the sky. Throughout the year, he would love to sit out on the open terrace from the afternoon on. He never liked the closed windows in England during winter ; he would say, "I don't like this ; my soul gasps".

The external world really fascinated him. That is why at

the time of writing he used to sit away from the window. When he was at our Alipore house, his room had windows on the east, which looked out on a number of palm trees and then a stretch of open meadow on the background of numerous big trees like Banians and Asoka. He used to turn his table when he sat down to write and would turn his back to the window. In our Baranagar house, in the very small corner-room which he called *Netrakona* (literally : eye-corner, also the name of a town in East Bengal), he used to place his table away from the window between two walls. He used to say : 'I won't be able to write if I sit by the open window. My mind will roam far out there.' And when his work came to be finished he would sit still, gazing out for hours on end.

I spent two months at Santiniketan before the Poet's fiftieth birthday celebrations. At that time he was staying in the eastern room on the first floor of the present guest-house. It was the smallest room leading to the open terrace. I put up in the western room across. In those days there were few visitors. And the Poet lived a very simple, bare sort of life. He used to have his meagre dinner before sunset and then sit out. Now and then some of the teachers of the ashrama would come. Then the evening would darken. The professors would leave one by one. And I would find him at 11 or at 12 sitting in the silent darkness. I would go to bed and when I would rise before dawn, I would find him sitting rapt, facing the east.

On certain days, perhaps he would go out when it was still dark and sit on the eastern verandah of the *mandir* (the Prayer Hall). Two or three men would gather behind him—he would speak a few words with the sunrise. Many of the sermons in the volumes called *Santiniketan* were spoken like this.

I have seen him like this for more than thirty years. There never was any break in this except during his last days when he lay unconscious on his sickbed. Even in illness, he would wait for the dawn, he would say repeatedly : 'It is dawn,

please lift me up.' And he always preferred to have the eastern room wherever he was, so that the first rays of the sun could fall on his face ; he would never shut the windows. He used to sit up long before sunrise. He would say, "Every day I get up early and try to merge myself in the big *I* away from my small *I*. It is not quite that I can't do it, but it takes some time." We would object, "It would be better to have a little more rest." But he would say, "I've found that it is easier in the early hours of the morning when it is quiet."

Funny things used to happen over this early rising when he would go abroad. When we were in Norway, his bed-room was next to ours with a door between. On the first day it was late when we went to bed after the meetings and the receptions and deep at night we woke up with knocks at the door and we found the Poet saying : "How long will you sleep ? It is quite late !" Black curtains were hanging all round the room. I put the lights on and saw that it was three o'clock. It was summer, when in Norway, the sun rises at midnight. The Poet had drawn the curtains off before he went to bed and at midnight the room was filled with the light, and he also had got up. However, I explained to him that it was only three and that in Norway one could not rise with the sun. In the morning, at the tea-table, he laughed over the incident.

He has sung and spoken of the glory of the dawn, "the honour that morning light confers".

Just as in the morning, at night too he would sit silent, before going to bed. He used to say, "I want to wash off all petty details of the day and, bathed clean, go to bed." There was no show in this. As a matter of fact he never used to feel at ease even to speak of this habit of meditation to strangers—in case they made light of what was so real to him. When he felt oppressed, then at times he would go on singing to himself. Twenty years ago, at the time of the Seventh Pous festival, he was depressed over some family matter. I had reached Santiniketan on the sixth. He was living in a new small house with

only two rooms—later on called *Prantik*. I was asked to stay there and the writing-table was removed to make room for my bed. At midnight, I woke up and beyond the curtain between the rooms, I heard him singing—‘To the blinded shower your light, to the dead your life’. The song went on again and again throughout the night. Again and again those words. “To the blinded shower your light”. It had been a cloudy night but towards morning it cleared up. In the morning after the service in the temple I said, “You had no sleep the whole night”. He said with a smile, “I sang, I was so oppressed. But in the morning it cleared up, like the sky”.

#### THE ‘DAIMON’ OR THE GOD OF HIS LIFE

The Poet had declared many a time how his *daimon* had given its directions through many major and minor incidents in his life. Quite a number of his poems and songs speak of this. Many a time, as has been our experience, plans and arrangements had been suddenly changed, at times even against his own wish. What appeared a mistake at first, later on often proved itself to have been beneficial.

Soon after his fiftieth birthday celebrations he wanted to go abroad. It was all arranged, and he was to leave from Calcutta by a City Line steamer. He was to start very early in the morning. On the previous day there were lots of visitors at the Jorasanko house to bid him farewell. When in the evening, it was past ten, I touched his feet in farewell and said, “I’d better go straight to the docks to-morrow,” he said, “Yes, at least that is how the arrangements stand.” There was a hitch somewhere in my mind. I thought, on my way home, why did he say that? Is it that the journey might not take place? I decided that the next morning I would better go earlier, to the house and not to the steamer-ghat.

Early in the dawn, before the street lamps were put out, I went up to his bedroom on the second floor at the Jorasanko

house and found that he was indisposed. The trip to England was postponed. It was not quite a serious illness, but he was very tired and depressed. It was decided that he should have rest for sometime, outside Calcutta. It was during those days, to while away the time, that he translated some of his songs into English. That is how the English *Gitanjali* was composed. Sometime after this, the Poet went to England. What happened after this is well-known. It was through this English *Gitanjali* that he had a wider introduction to the world. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for this book. The Poet had no doubts that his visit to England had to be postponed in order to give him the opportunity of writing the English version of the *Gitanjali*.

Things worked conversely as well. In 1928, during the centenary celebrations of the Brahmo Samaj, he was to have conducted the service in the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj mandir. But the Poet was quite ill. We had brought him back to Calcutta from Colombo on his way from there to Europe. His illness increased in Calcutta and the doctors had to stop interviews with his visitors. On the day before the festival, he was in the same condition. It was taken for granted that he would not be able to conduct the service. But when I went to see him very early on the centenary day itself, he said at once, "Take me to the mandir, I want to go". We somehow brought him and he not merely conducted the prayers but on his own began to sing. "Thou wakest me up thyself with thy living touch." And at the time of the sermon, he spoke with deep feeling all that he had to say of Rammohun Roy.

He spoke with a great deal of passion, but it did not affect his health in the least. On the contrary, in the afternoon, he said, "It was good that I went to the mandir. Even physically, I feel well."

He had for Rammohun Roy a profound respect and admiration; he felt bound to Rammohun in a kind of personal sympathy. In this connection I may tell of another incident. The Poet was in Europe when the non-co-operation movement

was started in India. He was receiving numerous letters from home. His countrymen wanted him to join the movement and he left for India. He was, we learnt, not going to stay a day in Bombay, nor was he coming to Calcutta, but was going straight to Santiniketan *via* Burdwan. I went up to Burdwan the previous night, which was spent at the station. At dawn, his train came. I found him grave and his first words were: "Prasanta, I come back to the country where Rammohun is called a pigmy." Then, he said: "While in Europe, I was getting letters from Andrews, Suren and others and was thinking that I would do my part when I came back home. All through the voyage on the steamer I had been preparing myself. And at Bombay, even before I had landed on the soil of our land, a newspaper came into my hand. Rammohun Roy was a pigmy because he had learnt English—that was the first news of India. I cannot forget this". I knew, from the look on his face that day, that the hope of his participation in the non-co-operation movement would never be realised.

The reason he explained in the two lectures he gave in Calcutta, shortly after that, on "Unity Through Education" and "Truth Calls." The unity between the people of one country and another can be brought about only through education and culture. India has always invited all humanity on the level of the Unitary man. Rammohun also carried this message and had built anew the bridge of the universal man and India through English education. The Poet himself had founded the Visva-Bharati with the same ideal. That is why his heart did not agree with the idea of getting away from Western Education.

To talk of another day. It was at the time of the foundation of the Visva-Bharati. In Bengal the non-cooperation movement was in full swing. People wanted him to write, particularly against the arrests and lathi-charges by the police in Calcutta. Important leaders went to Santiniketan and requested him to write and he agreed.

I reached the same evening. I was told that he was engaged on that writing in the little room on the first floor of "Dehali". He said : "Do you know what happened to-day ? I agreed with them when they came that I would write. I sorted out my ideas but the whole afternoon I wasted lazily. In the evening I thought : No, I must write it down. I rehearsed the whole thing in my mind, how to make it effective. But just as I drew the paper and took up the pen, my hand turned limp. After a shake-up, I tried again but the pen dropped down from my hand. Never in my life has such a thing happened to me. Since then I have been sitting quiet. I can't write it, I realise".

There was a lot of displeasure over this. There was much adverse criticism too. But the Poet had no doubt that his presiding deity had saved him from something which was not according to his will.

As in major affairs, I have seen the same thing happen in trivial details as well. Even he himself could never say when he would go to some place or what he would do and when. We have seen again and again how all arrangements had to be cancelled. At least five times his visit to Europe, I know, was cancelled. Once he was going to Madras and came back from Kharagpur ( only a few miles from Calcutta ). Once I remember his luggage had been sent already to Howrah station and as he himself was going to Howrah, near the bridge, the traffic police signalled. The car stopped and he said : "Turn the car back." We came back to the house.

I remember the day, when in 1926 we were to leave Budapest. The first decision was for Constantinople and so I reserved berths in the Orient Express going east. After a while he changed his mind for Paris, and so I booked our seats for the Orient Express going west. But Constantinople gained favour again. Luckily, the booking office was on the ground floor of our hotel building. I explained to them the Poet's moods and booked seats both ways. And whenever the Poet would change

his mind I would go down and come back to tell him that it was all arranged. Of course, I had to wire and phone Par's a number of times. Both the Orient Expresses arrive at Budapest at about ten at night and so we packed up and sat for dinner, when somebody came and insisted that the Poet must go to his country Croatia, to Zagreb. We travelled neither east nor west, we caught at the last moment the southern train for Zagreb. It was very crowded but somehow out of respect for the Poet, seats were found. However, this journey brought him in direct touch with people in Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey.

Again and again, arrangements had to be reshuffled like this. He himself used to comment : 'Why should one have to accept a thing just because it is all fixed ?' May be, it was all a Poet's moods. But he himself used to say, that his *daimon* guided his life, as in the major so in these minor events. In an essay he wrote in 1903, he dealt at length with this idea.

He also believed that he had signs and hints to get ready before disaster or danger. It was not knowing the future and that sort of thing. But a kind of mental preparation for some unknown danger or death, without knowing what exactly was impending. He once told me how during the year his wife died, seven months before the actual event, on New Year's Day, he felt a great sorrow of parting was coming. It was so real to him that he wrote of it to his wife to keep themselves ready.

I have found him forefeel like this about himself as well. In 1940, the night before he was leaving Calcutta for Kalimpong I saw him at the Jorasanko house, sitting in the western room, with a cheerless look. Bauthan (the Poet's daughter-in-law, Pratima Devi) had gone up to Kalimpong and the Poet did want to join her there. Yet there was some discord in his mind, as he told me, "I don't feel like going up mountains. It won't be good this time. But everything is settled. Bauma has gone and I don't want to upset anything. But there is a feeling against, inside me". A few days later in Kalimpong he became ill. We had



to bring him down to Calcutta in an unconscious state. It was his last illness.

In 1941, in July, I went to Santiniketan when talks were going on about the operation. But the Poet did not approve at all. Later on, however, he agreed. I myself had all along been against the operation. Even on the day of the operation, in the morning I begged the doctors to stop. Since then when one thinks of the terrible things happening all over the world and of the evil days gathering round India, particularly Bengal, one feels that perhaps it was good after all that the Poet had agreed to the operation, inspite of his own feelings.

#### HIS ATTITUDE TO SORROW

He realised in his own life the truth of his own words : "Good and evil whatever comes, accept reality with easy grace". As he used to say, "Reality is more important than good and evil. Hence our prayer *Asato ma sadgamaya* ( from the false or the unreal lead us to the real or the true )".

It was this true vision which gave him his calm of mind, even during a great bereavement. He would say, "As life is real, so is death. Grief it brings, but without death, life loses its quality. Just as fulfilment of love means little without the sense of the insatiable. Why exaggerate the grief? Life's claims are more urgent than death's".

The Poet never liked the clinging to souvenirs after a dear one's death. I remember the days when he was writing "Unregenerate Grief", "Seventeen Years", "First Grief", "Release" etc., all contained in *Lipika*. One day I was sitting near him on the verandah by the bedroom on the second floor at Jorasanko. It was evening, above the western sky was as yet red, below, the lane was getting dark and one or two street lamps were being lit. The Maharshi's death had taken place in the second floor room exactly on the top of the first floor room where the Poet died. As a child I had come to look at the

Maharshi. On the south wall there used to hang a picture of a church with a real clock set. Due to my age, my eyes used to dwell there. And that was the only thing left in the room which spoke of those days. I spoke of these things to the Poet. After a while he said :

“Father was very ill at that time in the Sudder Street house. We never hoped he would recover and then one day he called me and spoke to me : ‘I asked for you as I have to say something special. I do not wish to have my picture or sculpture or any such thing at Santiniketan. You must not keep any. And see that nobody else does.’”

The Poet added : “I know that Father was worried that there might be excesses to keep alive his memory, and he knew that he could depend on me. So he asked for me.” After a pause he said, “Do you know, at times I think that Rammohun Roy was wise in his death in England. You never know with our country here. There might have been a great fuss over him, if he himself had not stopped it from before. I also think at times that it would be better for me to die abroad.”

The Poet had told me more than once what the Maharshi had told him at the Sudder Street house. At the Santiniketan asrama there was no portrait or figure of the Maharshi ; it was forbidden. Not only that, many people had wished to keep apart, as memorial, the room at the Jorasanko house where the Maharshi died, but the Poet never agreed. He used it like any other living room, and the room did not even contain the Maharshi’s picture.

He never kept anybody’s photo. Not that he objected to photos or portraits. He had given innumerable photos of his own with his autograph to innumerable people who had asked for them. But he himself never felt the need of keeping any. In 1914 or 15, the Poet had spent a few days at Allahabad in the house of his nephew Satya Prasad Ganguli. I heard from him how there he had come across an old photograph of his Natun

Bauthan ( Jyotirindranath's wife ) and he wrote his great poem called "Chhabi" ( in *Balākā* ) where he says :

In a thousand streams life's river sweeps unstayed,  
With Death as anklets sweet  
Upon its dancing feet.

It was only a few days after "Chhabi" that he wrote "Shahjehan" which also contains splendid verse ;

The sepulchre  
Ne'er doth stir;  
It holds and hides old death with loving care  
In earth's grey dust,  
'Neath memory's crust.  
But who will hold or hide or bar  
Life, to which star by star  
Calls and beckons from afar ?  
Its welcome lies  
In divers worlds, new rising suns, and many skies.

This he has spoken of again and again, in songs and in poems. And I have seen again and again how in actual life he accepted death.

It was the summer of 1918. His eldest daughter Bela was ill, in the house of her husband Saratchandra. The Poet was at Jorasanko and every morning I used to take him to visit his daughter. He would go up, while I would wait below. The patient was slowly going down. One day, as usual, we went, and that day I sat in the car ; within a few moments he came down and got into the car ; and just as I looked at his face, he said simply ; "She left before I came. They told me as I was going up the stairs and so I came down."

While in the car, he did not speak. When we reached Jorasanko he said as on other days, "Let us go up." I followed him to his bed-room on the second floor. After sometime he spoke, "After all, I could do nothing. I had known for a long time that she would leave, yet every morning, I went and sat with her hand in mine. When a child, she used to say—Father, tell me a story. As in her childhood, during her illness,

too, she used to say now and then—Father, tell me a story, I used to tell her whatever would come into my head. That too is at an end.”

Then he sat silent in calm repose. That same day in the evening he had some work in hand. I asked if there should be any alteration in the arrangements. He said “No, why? No need for that”. And then he added in explanation: “Such things have happened before”. And then he talked of the time when his second daughter’s death took place.

The Swadeshi movement was in full swing at the time. Daily discussions were going on regarding the National Council of Education. Ramendrasundar Trivedi came every day and enquired daily after the Poet’s daughter. On the day of her death it got very late with the talks. Before leaving, standing on the stairs, Trivedi Mahasaya asked the Poet: How is she to-day? The reply was simple: She is dead. Trivedi Mahasaya, it is said, only stared at the face of the just bereaved father and without a word, walked down.

Let me record what I heard of the days when his youngest son died at Monghyr, of cholera. The Poet reached only at the last moment. It was he who had to console the distracted host. I have heard from Jagadananda Babu how he came back to Santiniketan. The telegram was brief,—he was coming, nothing more. Jagadananda Babu and others thought that he was bringing Sami back. So they went to the station with the transport of those days, the bullock-cart. The Poet came down from the train, alone. They did not realise at the time from his face that Sami was dead. Nothing was changed from his usual programme at Santiniketan.

Immediately after Sami’s death, on the occasion of Maghotsava, he spoke of the Great King of Sorrows.

Though, at the time of Sami’s death, no one saw him in grief, yet years after, one day, I saw his eyes filled with tears as he spoke of his youngest son. He had fever and was in the Jorasanko house. It was summer, Rathi Babu had gone out of

Calcutta. There was no one in the great house. In the evening, I went up and heard him reciting quite loudly. He smiled shyly and explained : "You see, there is a little fever. Perhaps the brain is a little excited for that, and I felt like reading out loudly."

Samindra was in his thoughts that evening. He said ; "It was like this with Sami. He was very small when his mother died. I brought him up myself. His make-up was like mine. Like me, he loved poetry. And he could sing. At times I would find him walking about restlessly reciting loudly, and I would know he had fever. And would bring him to bed. Even now, in old age, such things happen with me".

After a pause, he went on ; "I wrote a lot of poems for him. Sami used to say : Father, tell me a story. I would write a poem and he would learn it by heart. He used to recite with his whole body and head swaying, just like me in my own childhood days. How he used to roam about on the terrace. He had so much play in his mind, he would play all by himself. Looked like me, too." His eyes, I saw, were wet.

I also remember, when twenty years ago, I was at the Alipore Meteorological Laboratory and he was with us, one day news came that his brother Satyendranath's illness had taken a bad turn. He went to Ballygunge and when he came back, he looked grave, but nothing more. He said ; "It is finished", and then went up to his room and turned to his work as on other days. I had another guest in the house, an Englishman, Sir Gilbert Walker. That evening, I asked the Poet if he would like to have his dinner alone. He said, "But why ? After all, you have a foreign guest. I'll come to the dining-room". Conversation did not lag at the dinner-table. I remember a long talk after dinner on Indian and European music. My guest told me before going to bed : "I had heard of him for years. I have known his books. To-day I have come to know him in a big way".

Let me speak of another day. It was August 1932. He was in our Baranagar house. His only grandson Nitu was in

England and was very ill. Andrews had taken his mother, Mira, to bring him back home as early as possible. One day, a letter came from Andrews saying that Nitu was a little better. The next morning, the Poet said to Rani ( Mrs. Mahalanobis ) : "Though *Sabib* writes that Nitu is better, yet my mind feels heavy". He spoke of death, and concluded : "I got up at dawn, and looked out at your trees, your garden, and have been trying since then to tune myself to them. How refreshed they look with the monsoon. Their mind knows no fear. Their joy is that they live. When you spread yourself out at one with great nature, what relief ! The mind revives, even like those trees".

I, in the meantime, opened the newspapers and found a Reuter cable—Nitu was no more. I rang up Rathi Babu at Khardah. He came over and went up to his father. "There is Nitu's news". At first the Poet said : "What news ? Better ?" Rathindranath replied in the negative. He understood by Rathindranath's silence, and turned all so still. Just two drops of tears—nothing more. After a pause, he said : "Buri ( Nitu's sister ) is alone. Let Bauma go to Santiniketan to-day. I go with you to-morrow". He sat still for a time but only for a time. That very day he wrote the poem—"By the Pool", which is included in *Punascha* dedicated to Nitu. The next day he went to Santiniketan where preparations were going on for the Varsha-Mangal, or the Monsoon Song Festival. There was a talk to cancel it for Nitu's death. But he didn't allow that, and took part in it himself. It was at that time that he wrote in a letter to Mira :

"In the midst of all our lapses and omissions, all our troubles and sorrows, the major fact is that we have loved. From the outside, the tie may snap, but if you had been deprived of the relation within, then that lack would have been a great void. We have come to our human world. We have united in many a relationship, and then when the time comes, we have to drift apart. Again and again this has happened, and will happen again. Life is fulfilled with this happiness, and this



That is why, race to face with death, he could say,

I am greater than death, this my last word  
I will say and then go.

#### HIS PITY AND SYMPATHY

He considered it barbaric to make a man work for you just because you can make him. As he used to say, civilisation lies in establishing some relationship beyond the mere necessity. He was ever considerate to men in humble stations, labourers or men who have to work as servants. In the afternoon, he would never call for servants. He knew they had their rest then. He would wait till they came by themselves. If necessary, he would do what he could, himself.

He always tried to establish some affectional relationship with these people. During the last years, Banamali was his personal servant. There were numerous jokes about him, a lot of laughter, tags of song. And how worried he used to be when Banamali would get some news of illness from his home.

He never had contempt for the least important of men. Whoever wrote to him, and thousands wrote to him always, all got replies in his own hand, so long as he was capable of writing himself. He never drove away anyone who came to see him, and innumerable people came. And this, even if he happened to be unwell, even if he had important work to finish. He would be vexed if he came to know that we had refused somebody, because he had some work in hand. "If a person is pleased only with a few words, only a visit, can't I do that much for him?" he would say.

His sympathy extended to the animal world as well, particularly to those that are neglected. He never had the hobby of keeping birds or pets. But we have seen how helpless animals used to come to him for his protection.





The Poet was greatly attracted by trees which people do not usually take care of. Once, when he dwelt in the house called Konarka at Santiniketan, he grew a regular garden of wild thorny plants, collected from various places. He used to water them himself and would call us and point out, Look, look what lovely thorny flowers ! He gave his own names to these nameless wild beauties—Gold-drop, Wood-joy, Gold-cluster, Springtime. It was not for nothing that he wrote that famous essay on the women who are neglected in our classical literature. These unnamed flowers figure in his poetry, sung for the first time.

. . . . . Obese contempt  
 Sucks the blood from helpless breasts  
 And drinks, hydra-mouthed. Insolent inequity  
 Laughs at pain in selfishness. . . .  
 . . . . . To these dumb pale voices  
 We must endow language, in these broken  
 dry tired hearts  
 We have to raise hosannahs of hope.

And it was not merely in verse that he professed deep concern for the poor and the oppressed. In his life he helped such people in various ways. That is shown even in his management of his family estates. In this connection I might mention an incident. Five or six years ago we were going to the village Hijlabat by boat from Kushtia. The elderly boatman told us on enquiry that he belonged to the Tagore estates.

I asked in curiosity if he had seen Rabindranath. His face brightened up and he said, "Oh yes, I've seen him. Many a time he passed through our village. I also saw him at the Cutchery house. What looks ! Not a man, like a god indeed. Such looks are rarely to be seen. And what kindness ! We had free access to him. Nobody could stop us. That was his order and whenever we would complain to him of our trouble, he would remedy them."

There was a talk of the Poet's coming on a trip to Hijlabat. When the boatman heard that, he exclaimed, "Oh, I'd like to look at him again. When does he come ? Please let us know, we will all come to see him". It was strange how this old boatman who had seen him forty years ago, never forgot him. His face brightened up to hear of the Poet and he went on repeating : "Such a man one rarely sees. Such a man is rare."

The Poet was pleased when we told him of this humble boatman. He said, "They really loved me. I remember, when quite a young man I took charge of the estates, how an old Muslim tenant came to me. That year the harvest was bad and the tenants had come for remission of rent. I did my best and they were pleased. But this old tenant came up and said, 'You are remitting a lot of money, won't the old master scold you ? You are young. Think well and then act.' He was so fond of me, that he was worried that my brothers might scold me."

He had again and again spoken of village reforms and the motive of all that, as well as his own activities in that direction, had one end in view : how to brighten up the life of the poor and the deprived. That explains why Sriniketan came to form such a major part of the Visva-Bharati. He himself had tried in practice the big ideals he wrote about, both during the period of his management of the family estates as also the Swadeshi Movement. He utilised the entire amount he received from the Nobel Award for an agricultural bank to help the farmers. Up to his last days he was preoccupied with the thought as to how the

common man of our country could have a little more food, and better living conditions. He never deceived himself or others with the device of big ideals. On the contrary, he was always on the alert not to allow words to cover up real action. As he wrote in one of his poems :

So here I am, waiting for the message  
from the Poet of the earth,  
of the peasant the comrade  
whose words and deeds have achieved  
true concurrence,  
May his words reveal kinship  
may he conceal not, nor hoodwink  
nor let his verse tempt the eye alone.  
May he give what I lack,  
May he save himself from the luxury  
of mimic sympathy for the labouring people,  
which professes what is not its own  
trying to thieve that  
whose price is dearly paid.

#### PATIENCE AND GENEROSITY

He had wonderful patience and tolerance for diverse men. And he never interfered with anybody's freedom whether in opinions or personal matters, nor did he put any pressure from above.

He was ever alert that there were no lapses, as far as the fundamental ideal of Santiniketan was concerned. Beyond that, he allowed complete freedom. Many a time, there had been talks in Santiniketan against his own aims and ideals ; there had been even, one might say, moves in the matter.

There had been pointed demonstrations of things he did not like. We would often lose patience, and tell him to put a stop to such activities. But he, with his forbearance, would never agree. He would say that nothing much is gained by imposing an order from outside. For ten years I was intimately connected with the Visva-Bharati's organisational work, having

acted as its general secretary. At times, we had differed, he had been displeased or sorry, but he never issued orders to me in administrative matters.

He had the strangest generosity towards those who had criticised him unfairly or attacked him or had tried to do damage to him. I remember, some twentytwo years ago, one evening I was sitting on the verandah of the Jorasanko Red House, when a well-known writer of those days came to see him. This gentleman had indulged for months on end in attacking the Poet with ridicule. He had done his best to stop the Poet's fiftieth birthday celebrations in Calcutta. For years, he had nothing to do with the Poet, and so I was surprised when he came. However, after a few preliminary words, he informed the Poet that he was bringing out an annual publication and wanted the Poet to contribute. The Poet had a fine piece in hand, which he gave away at once. When the man had gone, I said, "You contribute even for him?" With a smile he replied: "I gave it so easily because it was him. That he criticises me is his sweet will. That he ridicules me or abuses me may perhaps increase his fame. But now he has come to me in his own need. Why deprive him there? What does it matter to me?"

This sort of thing was quite common. I know of one writer who spread in cold print some false scandal, which cannot be even mentioned, relating to the Poet's personal life. He was shocked. He was also disturbed that such horrible misrepresentation might pass, without protest, as a fact in future history. But a libel suit could not be brought against the man as even that would be humiliating for the Poet. Yet, this same literary gentleman was received with grace when later on he came to see Rabindranath.

I had heard from him of another poet, who had quite a position in the field of Bengali letters and politics. He used to act hostilely in various ways, but for a long period he went on receiving fifty rupees a month from the Poet. And he used

to say, "What I fear most is lest I expect a return from the man I help".

He had faith in everybody, as he chose to look for the better part in the make-up of everything. After the great Bengal earthquake, he received a letter from Rajshahi, which said that it was from a widow, who had lost her home in the earthquake and who, with her children, was utterly stranded. Monthly help began to be sent to her. Then, later on, when he went to Rajshahi, he enquired after this family, and came to know that there was no such widow, but a good-for-nothing young man had been living on his money. But even then the donation did not stop at once and then he called for the young man and got him provided for.

On account of his faith in the basic goodness of man he was cheated quite often. I had heard from him how while on a trip on a ferry-steamer, a boy came up to his wife and called her his mother-of-a-previous-life and said that his great desire was to drink the sanctified water touched by her feet every morning. The history of the previous life was laughed away, but the youth came to stick to the Jorasanko household. He announced that he had been admitted to a college. So he had free board and lodging and money for his college fees, for books to be bought. The Poet gave him charge of his own library. After a time, a number of books could not be found. He had faint thoughts of suspicion, of which he felt quite ashamed. However, he called for the young man, and asked him to make a search to find out the books. After a few days he came and told the Poet that he had found out the reason why books were getting lost. What was the reason? The youth replied with a solemn face that Suren Babu, Sudhi Babu, Bolu Babu—they all had free access to the library. The Poet could not at first realise the implication between his nephews' visits to the library and the loss of the books. When he did, he himself felt quite uncomfortable that anyone could utter such a thing. But he told his nephews,

who naturally were furious. And they found out on enquiry that the young man, far from being a college student, was not even a matriculate. The second-hand bookshop was also found out, and some of the books were even recovered. But even after this, when the young man came to him and said, "Father, (in the heavy Sanskrit address) I am guilty," the Poet could not drop him. Some arrangements were made even for him.

Not that he was never angry or vexed with people. But he never would nourish such feelings, because, as he used to say, it meant that he himself forgot himself, and that was his shame. When his second daughter was mortally ill he took her to Almora. But the illness turned worse and he had to hurry back to Calcutta. There was no proper transport. With his daughter in the *dandi*, he had to walk the long mountain-path down to the railway station. Midway, in the train, he found that the purse containing two hundred rupees was missing from the bench. The Poet told me, "At first it was anger with the unknown thief. Then I tried to persuade myself that the man must have needed the money badly. Perhaps his home was in some danger greater than mine. Then I tried to think that I had made a gift to him of the money. He was not a thief, I gave it to him. The moment I thought that, I regained calm of mind".

The Poet used to say, "It is the injunctions of religious books which say Do not do this evil deed, do not do that. God never had such strictures. His one wish He has declared—Express yourself, reveal yourself. That is His one order—to the Sun, to the Earth, to man. All over the universe this is His one canon : Express". The Poet never judged a man according to rules of 'should' and 'should not'. Man was always man to him. He had no puritanism.

That is why people whom the moralists would keep away came to him freely. He never could bear with any falsehood or with meanness or pettiness, but he never believed that any

lapse from the customary code should make a man an outcaste. Nor did he ever hold the children guilty for the social mistakes of their parents. To quote his own words : the important thing to consider is not the mistakes a man commits, but the man that he is.

Some seventeen years ago when preparations were on foot for the performance of a play by the *Vivva-Bharati*, the Poet called for a girl who was an excellent actress. He asked her to take a part in his play and coached her for days. It so happened that the girl had a bad reputation, in our usual social world she was an outcaste. Objections arose over acting with her. And he was forced to leave her out, but he was sorry. And he never could forget that he had to accept this for the sake of the others.

When his story *Laboratory* was first published, he was ill and had to be brought down from Kalimpong. I went to see him in the evening and was told that he had enquired after me since afternoon. He pointed to the story at once and asked, "Have you read it?" I said, "I liked it very much, a really powerful story". He said, "Oh ! Yes, you of course will like it. But what do the others say ? Oh, fie, fie ! I won't be able to show my face ! Rabi Thakur has lost his head at eighty ; how he writes about a girl like Sohini !" With a smile he added, "I have done it deliberately. What sort of a person Sohini is, her strong mind, her loyalty, that was the main consideration—the episode of her bodily affairs is secondary. Nila will pass quite easily in society, but Sohini will be difficult to accept. Yet I have shown with emphasis the great difference in the mental make-up between the mother and the daughter".

The mind of man—that was his preoccupation. The externals were secondary. Let me tell you here of a play which never came to be written down. I heard from him that at the time of *Kacha and Devayani*, *Chitra* and all those Mahabharata stories, he was moved by the idea of another episode—how the plundering horde stole and took away the Yadu women



( Krishna's clan ), even old Arjuna could not stop them. At first he thought he would write this play in fourteen-lettered verse, but as he had done that in a number of pieces during those days, he postponed it. Then after a decade or so, when he wrote the *Raja* or *King of the Dark Chamber* and *Achalayatan* or the *Rigid House*, he thought he would make a prose-play out of this theme. One day he gave me his idea of the play. Krishna, the five Pandava brothers and the heroes of the clan of Yadu were engrossed in big wars, big talk, big ideals, and had no time to devote to their women. Women were there only for their household work. But they were not satisfied with that. In the meantime, the non-Aryan *dasyus* who were men of the earth used to come and talk to the women, sing to them and the women were drawn to them. It was the women who destroyed the weapons of the Pandavas so that the robbers could easily abduct them. Arjuna went out to resist and found that his great *gandiva's* strings were cut. He understood but it was too late. This play somehow was never written. But he used to talk of it now and then and used to laugh, "My readers will be furious if I wrote this play."

#### UNIVERSAL MAN

He had gone preaching from country to country, in writing and in lectures, the ideal of man beyond nationalities. But it was not mere words with him. How pleased he used to be when a foreigner came as his guest, and he would build up a kind of kinship. From Norway came professor Konow, he came to be called Kanva ( the paternal sage in *Sakuntala* ). A girl from Denmark acquired the name, Haimanti. Somebody else would be called Vasanti and so on. While abroad, he used to say, "When people in foreign countries come to me, give me things in love, do this or that for my comfort, then I realise deeply that I am a human being, blessed is my man's life." He wrote :

Woman, thou hast made my days of exile  
tender with beauty.  
and hast accepted me to thy nearness  
with a simple grace  
that is like the smile with which the  
unknown star welcomed me  
when I stood alone at the balcony and  
gazed upon the southern night.  
There came the voice from above.  
"We know you,  
for you come as our guest from the dark of  
the infinite, the quest of light."  
Even in the same great voice thou hast cried  
to me: "I know you,"  
And though I know not thy tongue, Woman,  
I have heard it uttered in thy music,—  
"You are ever our guest on this earth,  
poet, the guest of love".

And it was not merely the foreign faces, the men and women. In South America he wrote:

O foreign flower, when I ask you  
your name,  
You swayed your head smiling  
and I knew : what is in a name !  
Enough that your smile identified you ...  
O foreign flower, when I ask you, tell me  
Will you forget me ?  
You smile and swing your head, and I know  
I know you will think of me always.  
Two days hence  
I shall go to another land  
And you will know me in dreams of distances—  
And you wont forget.

As he had declared in *Gitanjali* :

Thou hast made me known to friends  
whom I knew not.

Thou hast given me seats in homes  
not my own.

Thou hast brought the distant near  
And made a brother of the stranger.

This had been literally true in his own life.

In November 1926, when we were going from Serbia to Bulgaria, the train stopped at the frontiers at dead of night. The sky was flooded with moonlight and some one came up in front of the Poet's compartment and began to play on the flute. The melody was a little strange to us, though it had something of our music. The music went on even when the train started again. We never knew who the flute-player was nor did he meet the poet. His only reward was that he played for the Poet who was moved.

Bent as he was to admire the best in foreigners, he never could tolerate that the power of arms should stop the march of humanity. He went to Italy at Mussolini's invitation. He was shown only the pleasant side of Italy under a fascist regime. He was surrounded day and night by orthodox fascists. And when the Poet wrote, he praised Mussolini's regime. The other side of the picture he came to know when he had left Italy. At Villeneuve, he met Romain Rolland and Duhamel and then Madame Salvadori, Madame Salvamini, Angelica Balbanoff and others, all exiles from Italy. He realised his mistake and was restlessly eager to undo it. He started to write afresh on the state of things in Italy. We typed all day but could not cope with his urgent flow. He would write and then scrap the whole thing, nothing came up to his satisfaction. He would not take his meals, almost lost his sleep, became quite ill. We brought him from Villeneuve to Zurich and then to Innsbruck, to Vienna and then to Paris. The best medical help of Europe was of no avail. He was restless. Then he finished the statement and sent it to the *Manchester Guardian*, and he regained his calm and was well.

It was like this to the end of his life. When fascist Germany invaded Norway, the news came in the evening over the radio and he turned grave and said, "The demons are now in Norway. They won't leave anybody untouched." And I remember how for days he went on talking of Norway, the people of Norway.

In 1940, in September, he had to be brought down unconscious from Kalimpong. A few days after that, when he was still very weak and could not speak naturally, I was informed that he had called for me. I got a little late and he said at once, "I have been asking for you, the war the Chinese are fighting—", his words got indistinct. He stopped and then said, "Why are you so late? I can't speak well what I want to. A little while before, it was quite distinct". His weak health, I saw, had not been able to stand the excitement and I sat down for him to recover. Then, in broken phrases, haltingly, he spoke, "The people of China have always considered war to be barbarous. But now they are compelled to fight against the mad aggressor. It is to their honour, that they are fighting against wrong. There is no shame even in their defeats. Their glory is that they have resisted oppression".

I understood what he wanted to say. Long ago he had written :

Where tolerance is weakness,  
O Terrible, let me be ruthless.  
At your bidding, let true words flash  
From my mouth, like a sword  
At your signal.

And at eighty, in the midst of the serious illness he could not forget China. He could not even sit up in his bed, but never could he forget that protest there must be against wrong. He wrote :

Give me power, O awful Judge,  
on the throne of Great Time,  
give me strength, give me the voice of thunder.

Just three months before his death he wrote in *Crisis of Civilisation* :

As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in his history after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises. A day will come when unvanquished Man will retrace his path of conquest, despite all barriers to win back his lost human heritage.

He never lost this faith. He had profound confidence in Russia. When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, during the last days of his illness, he waited eagerly every day for news of Russia. Again and again, quite simply, he used to say, "My greatest happiness will be in Russia's victory." Every morning he looked forward to receiving good news. How pale he looked and how he would throw away the newspaper, if that day the news was bad for Russia.

The day he had the operation, in the morning, half an hour before that fatal act, his last words to me were: "Tell me Russia's news." When I said that the war had taken a better turn, his face brightened and he said, "Won't it? It has got to turn better. They can do it. Only they will do it."

Those were his last words to me. I am fortunate, indeed, that in the light of his face that day I beheld the worship of Man.

## RAMMOHUN ROY

*By* KAZI ABDUL WADUD

### BOYHOOD

RAMMOHUN WAS BORN IN MAY, 1772. So says Miss Collett, his early English biographer.

The two outstanding things about the boy Rammohun were his mental gifts and his devotion to the family idol. The first had as noble a fruition as well-wishers could desire; the fruition of the second was somewhat unusual, though not rare, as we have in Bengal the example of the turbulent and contentious youthful Nimai turning in later years into the rapturous Sri Chaitanya. But such has not been the course of development with many a notable personality: the boy Buddha is found tender-hearted and introspective; the boy Muhammad is, in the traditions, singularly disciplined in an environment of high passions; Sivnath Sastri, the Brahmo leader, could not even as a boy partake of the food offered to an idol—so writes he in his autobiography—although he was the son of a Brahmin priest. Rammohun's boyish devoutness had, however, in his maturer years a pleasant fruition. The fighter in him looks so magnificent to the admirer and so ruthless to the critic that the sensitive heart in him is very often missed by both of them. Fortunately it is now known fairly well that his was no arid rationalism; on the contrary, he was fed by a secret fount of religious love. A moving dramatic scene would often leave this intrepid fighter in tears, so also would the memory of a dear friend who was no more. To the contemporary Britishers he was 'the oriental gentleman, versatile, emotional yet dignified'—and the estimation was substantially correct.

The father, Ramakanta, was eager to ensure a bright future for his talented boy. He sent him, after he had received his

primary schooling, to Patna at the age of nine to have there the best education the age could give.<sup>1</sup>

#### RAMMOHUN AND MUSLIM THOUGHT

Young Rammohun stayed at Patna for a few years only. But short though this stay was, its influence on his life was far-reaching. We would try to look a little closely into the nature of this influence.

Rammohun's discourses on the Hindu and the Christian scriptures are fortunately well-preserved ; but not so his discourses or the outline of his discussions on Islamic theology. In his *Tuhfat-ul-Muwabbidin* ( A Gift to Monotheists ) he quotes, of course, a few lines from the Quran and makes some observations on the sayings of the Prophet ; but his role in it is that of a deist and rationalist with no religious moorings. Yet from such observations and references of his in respect of Islam and Muslims, found scattered in his *Tuhfat* and other writings, we may have an idea of his attitude towards Islamic thought and culture and also of their influence on him.

It is widely held that his aversion to the image-worship of his ancestors was the outcome of his early acquaintance with the Quran. But the influence was even greater : the Quran was also responsible for his aversion to the Christian Trinity and the doctrine of vicarious atonement and also at the same time for his profound regard for Jesus himself. Here are some Quranic lines about Jesus :

They say : Allah has taken a son ( to Himself ) : Glory be to Him; He is the self-sufficient; His is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth; you have no authority for this; do you say against Allah what you do not know ? ( 10 : 68 ) . . . and we gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear arguments and strengthened him with the holy spirit . . . ( 2 : 87 ) .

1 I have not taken into consideration the recent findings of Brajendranath Banerjee, the historian in regard to Rammohun's early life as the findings are tentative, more or less ; and not intimately connected with the great reformer's mind and character.

There is a verse in the Quran which is commonly known as the prayer of Jesus ; it runs as follows :

If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants ; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise ( 5 : 118 ).

A tradition runs to the effect that the Prophet was once found repeating these words of supreme reliance on the Almighty for a whole night.

Rammohun seems to have been touched by other ideas and sentiments of the Quran also. The Quran, it is well known, draws man's attention to the design in nature, to the teachings of history in respect of man's misdeeds ; it tells in fervid language how the Sun, the Moon, the rain-giving clouds, the spring breeze declare the glory of God, how they have been employed to the service of man, how man finds plenty for his sustenance, and how all these are the great signs of the Almighty. In his *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* Rammohun adduces with avidity these arguments in support of divine providence.

The Quran's attitude towards non-Muslims is also worthy of emulation :

And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance ( 6 : 109 ).

And those who...repel evil with good,...they shall have the (happy) issue of the abode ( 13 : 22 ).

And say to My servants (that) they speak what is best ( 17 : 53 ).

And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say, Peace. ( 25 : 63 ).

Rammohun championed the cause of women throughout his life, and on that subject the Quran says :

O you who believe ! it is not lawful for you that you should be heirs to women against their will ; and do not straiten them in order that you may take part of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of manifest indecency, and treat them kindly ; then if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has placed abundant good in it. ( 4 : 19 )



The Prophet himself was noted for his respectful demeanour towards women. Once his wet-nurse came to see him. He, then the supreme ruler of Medina, stood up in her honour and spread his own scarf for her to sit on.

But the greatest thing which Rammohun seems to have imbibed from the Quran was the sense of the majesty of the Almighty ; that sense has been well expressed in some of Rammohun's devotional songs. Here are some lines from Rammohun and along with them some verses from the Quran :

Rammohun

How can the eye see Him whom the mind cannot reach !  
 He is even beyond our spiritual qualities ( *gunas* ),  
 He can never be grasped by the senses,—  
 How can He ever be associated with any form ?  
 He who brought about the world by will, maintains it at will,  
 Destroys it at will, He alone is true—know this.

Quran

...Nothing is like a likeness of Him (42 : 11).  
 Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth,  
 And when He decrees an affair, He only says to it,  
 Be, so there it is (2 : 117 ).

Rammohun

Meditate on the One who resides at one and the same  
 time in water, on land, in ether ;  
 Who created this world without beginning and without end,  
 Who knows everything, But Him no one knows.

Quran

...He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and  
 they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what  
 He pleases ; His throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and  
 the preservation of them both tires Him not (2 : 255).

Rammohun

Who dare know Him ;  
 Senses can never do it,  
 The Brahman beyond all, who is beyond our  
 spiritual qualities,  
 Has caused all.

### Quran :

Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends (all) vision ; and He is the knower of subtleties, the Aware (6 ; 104).

The Quran does not countenance any prying into what God or soul or revelation really is :

And they ask you about the soul (revelation). Say : the soul (revelation) is by the commandment of my Lord, and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little (7 : 85).

Rammohun too maintains consistently that the supreme Truth is inscrutable in essence, and that He is to be known by auxiliary signs only, such as the design in creation.

It is generally held that the Quranic God is the God of might and unquestioned authority, all that move and breathe tremble in fear of Him, and He deals favour or frown at will on whomsoever He pleases. There are such sentiments in the Quran no doubt, but to a more attentive reader the Allah of the Quran will be found to be All-Majestic, Ever Awake and above all Ever-Loving. And the Quran asks man to submit himself wholly to this Allah in these oft-repeated words :

Believe ( in Him ) and do good deeds.

'Good deeds' here means naturally the useful deeds which human beings have usually to perform to keep up their everyday life. But Muslim divines do not, as a rule, place sufficient emphasis on this secular aspect of the question. Rammohun's '*lokashreyas*' ( human welfare ) on which he emphasized always meant ordinary useful social activities.

To Mussalmans of all shades of opinion the Quran is the highest authority. But they differ in their interpretation of the Holy Writ. Among those who attempted some sort of rational approach to the Quran the Mutazilites are well-known ; and so are some sections of the Sufis who attempted an intuitional approach to it. The Islam which Rammohun prized was not the common variety of it as the following lines from his *Second Appeal to the Christian Public* will show :

Disgusted with the puerile and unsociable system of Hindoo

idolatry, and dissatisfied at the cruelty allowed by Mussalmanism against Non-Mussalmans, I, on my searching after the truth of Christianity, felt for a length of time very much perplexed with the difference of sentiments found among the followers of Christ ( I mean Trinitarians and the Unitarians, the grand division of them ) until I met with the explanation of the unity given by the Divine Teacher himself as a guide to peace and happiness.<sup>2</sup>

It was the Mutazilite and the Sufistic Islam that inspired Rammohun.

He delighted in the writings of the great Sufi poets such as Saadi and Hafiz. The following couplet of Hafiz was among his favourite lines :

The well-being of this life and the life hereafter  
lies in this :

Rejoice with friends and make peace with foes.

In his *Tuhfat-ul-Mumabhidin* the following lines of Hafiz have been quoted :

The wrangles of the seventy-two sects are all vain—  
They could not see truth and went the way of whims  
and foolishness.

Oppress nobody, and do whatever else you like ;  
In our way there is no other sin except that.

And this couplet of Saadi was perhaps dearest to his heart :

The path to God is no other than service of His creatures ;  
It is not in the rosary, in the prayer carpet,  
nor in the Sufi's garment.

He often said that these two lines should form his epitaph. And in the memorandum he submitted to the Directors of the East India Company for the amelioration of the lot of Indian peasants he quoted the following lines of Saadi :

Bind yourself with ties of love with your subjects  
and thus be assured of victory against your foes ;  
For, to the just king, his subjects are his soldiers.

In the lines Rammohun quotes from the Sufis his own

mind too stands sufficiently revealed. Sufi literature abounds in mystical statements concerning the true nature of the God-head. In Jalaluddin Rumi's poetry monism finds an attractive literary expression. But the lines Rammohun quotes do not indicate if he was interested at all in those mystical probings; they do however indicate his deep joy in the leading Sufis' love of man and creation. It is now well-known that Rammohun was a pioneer in the realization of the oneness of humanity; that message will be found well-expressed in the following lines of Saadi :

The children of Adam are so many limbs ( of a body ) in  
relation to one another,  
For they originated from the same source.  
If one limb is affected other limbs also know no comfort.  
If you cannot feel the sufferings of men,  
Then you should not have been called a man.

The Sufi poetry regaled the inner man in Rammohun, but the Mutazilite doctrines nerved him for action. Some of his powerful polemical shafts came from the Mutazilite quiver, e. g. :

1. God is omnipotent ; but He cannot destroy Himself nor can create His equal.
2. Attributes of God are not independent of His essence. Admission of independence of attributes would violate the unity of the God-head. ( It is principally by this argument that Rammohun tried to set aside the claim to divinity of different gods and goddesses. )
3. Rammohun held that the Vedas were not eternal, they were perishable. According to the Mutazilites the Quran was a created thing ; therefore perishable in time, i. e. not eternal like God. ( This view of the Mutazilites was mainly responsible for their unpopularity. )

The chief difference, however, between the Mutazilites and Rammohun seems to be that the former were mainly scholars and academicians, but Rammohun, though an eminent

scholar himself, loved much more to work a humanistic and patriotic programme.

Rammohun's debt to Muslim logicians has been freely admitted. The Principle of Sufficient Reason which these logicians discovered is one of the bases on which modern scientific enquiries are conducted.

We have not the means to ascertain if Rammohun's particular approach to Muslim thought and culture was shared by any of his Muslim contemporaries.<sup>8</sup> We gather from his biography that at a certain time he offended Muslims by some of his remarks, but became friends with them when in later years he came to live in Calcutta permanently, so much so that his own people disapproved of the friendship on the suspicion of his partaking of the Mussalman's food and drink. He had while in England occasion to make the statement that the high Muslim officials of his time were well-informed and efficient, that the Muslims as a class were superior to the Hindus in scholarship, intelligence, character, physical fitness and dress.

Yet we would think that his friendship with the Muslims was based more on similarities of taste and culture than those of views. He liked Islamic ideas and the Muslim way of life of his time, but not to the extent of being enamoured of them. So he could advise the rulers to change the court language from Persian into English in the expectation that the common people would receive thereby better justice at the Courts, and that Indians would have better facilities for acquiring European sciences.

#### RAMMOHUN AND HINDU THOUGHT

Rammohun returned home from Patna to find that a wide gulf had yawned between him and his father in respect of

8. The author of *Seir-ul-Mutaakherin* who was Rammohun's older contemporary or just preceded him, was a patriot and a man of strong common sense, but not so catholic in religious outlook as Rammohun.

their religious convictions. He left his ancestral home and wandered about as far as Tibet. ( His *Tahfat-ul-Muwabbidin* opens with the statement that he had travelled to the remotest parts of the world, in plains as well as in hilly lands ). He had, very likely, thought of undertaking a journey to Tibet while at Patna with the intention of knowing Buddhism there. His experiences of Lama-worship, ghost-worship and various other superstitious practices of the hillmen added perhaps to his anxiety for the creed of the one formless Creator.

The chief event of his life after the Tibetan adventure was his stay at Banares and study of the Hindu scriptures. It was a deep study indeed that he made there, as has been attested by competent scholars. And it is this particular branch of his studies that has borne worthy fruition so far. Hindus too have not accepted him to the extent they should have, yet it is but too true that they have accepted him most.

In his standard Bengali biography by Nagendranath Chattopadhyaya his discourses on Hindu theology have received ample attention. The author has, among other things, pointed out that Rammohun, although he calls himself a follower of Sankara, stresses the value of the life of the God-loving householder, while Sankara favours that of the Sannyasin. Dr. Brajendra-nath Seal characterizes Rammohun's monism as of the nature of qualified monism or dualism. But Prof. Radhakrishnan's interpretation of Sankara's philosophy encourages us to think that monism—the outstanding achievement of Indian speculative thought—may, with profit, be approached from Rammohun's standpoint. Says Radhakrishnan :

Sankara does not assert an identity between God and the world but only denies the independence of the world. . . If we raise the question as to how the finite rises out of the bosom of the infinite, Sankara says that it is an incomprehensible mystery, Maya. We know that there is the absolute reality, we know that there is the empirical world, we know that the empirical world rests on the absolute ; but the how of it is beyond our knowledge. . . The greatest thinkers are

those who admit the mystery ( of the relation of God to the world ) and comfort themselves by the idea that the human mind is not omniscient. Sankara in the East and Bradley in the West adopt this wise attitude of agnosticism.<sup>4</sup>

Again :

No theory has ever asserted that life is a dream and all experienced events are illusions. One or two late followers of Sankara lend countenance to this hypothesis, but it cannot be regarded as representing the main tendency of Hindu thought.

The power Rammohun shows in the disentanglement of Hindu religious thoughts will ever be marvelled at by those who will try to view him narrowly. The twin truths of *ekamevadvityam* and *lokaśhreyaś* ( 'the One having no compeer' and 'good of humanity' ) which he extracted from the frightful depths of Hindu traditions and scriptures have not been prized sufficiently by his people in general as they do not recognize them to be so valuable. The Hindu way of life and thought has, for reasons not easy to fathom, been associated with image-worship from time immemorial. There have been thinkers among them who looked upon this particular method of approach to the Divinity as of inferior worth ; but none of them seem to have gone like Rammohun to the length of declaring it as positively harmful to the life of the spirit ( or to human life as a whole ) . The Sivanarayani fraternity of medieval Hindu India (who just preceded Rammohun) were, writes Pandit Kshiti-mohan Sen in his book on mystical cults in medieval India, uncompromising monotheists. But Hindus of such a disposition are too rare to count. It seems undeniable that Rammohun's strong antipathy to image-worship was largely responsible for the harsh treatment he received from his contemporaries and his comparative unpopularity with posterity. And to that antipathy of his should be added his dress and deportment which were not those of a Sannyasin, - the ever-prized symbol of Hindu spiritual life. Rammohun defended

4. Radhakrishnan : Hindu View of Life.

himself with conviction, pointing out that people should dress themselves decently and that adoption of meat diet would restore virility to his countrymen.

Rammohun's religious lead has failed to evoke sufficient warmth even amongst the elite of the Hindus on account of the directive in matters spiritual of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the great mystic of modern times whose doctrine of "as many religions ( or philosophies ), so many paths ( of realization of Truth )", has provided much more mental repose for them than Rammohun's doctrine of "adoption of ancient scriptures as modified by 'good of humanity' and 'reason'." And this doctrine of 'as many religions so many paths' has not only provided an intellectual haven for the present-day Hindu intelligentsia, it has been greeted as the greatest message of modern times by international personalities like the French savant, Romain Rolland and the great Indian, Mahatma Gandhi. Says Rolland :

I have never seen anything fresher or more potent in the religious spirit of all ages than this enfolding of all the Gods existing in humanity, of all the faces of truth, of the entire body of human Dreams, in the heart and the brain, in the Paramahansa's great love and Vivekananda's strong arms...But you must not suppose that this immense diversity spells anarchy and confusion...Each note has its own part in the harmony. No series of notes must be suppressed, and polyphony reduced to unison with the excuse that your own part is the most beautiful ! Play your own part perfectly and in time, but follow with your ear the concert of the other instruments united to your own...And this teaching condemns all spirit of propaganda, whether clerical or lay, that wishes to mould other brains on its own model ( the model of its own God or of its own Non-god who is merely God in disguise. )

He has, along with his own comments, cited the following observation of Mahatma Gandhi :

My veneration for other faiths is the same as for my own faith. Consequently the thought of conversion is impossible...Our prayer for others ought never to be : 'God, give them the light Thou hast given to me !' but : 'God, give them all the light and truth they need for their highest development.'



The words of Rolland and Gandhi are obviously born of deep concern for human welfare. Rolland observes pointedly :

At this stage of human evolution wherein both blind and conscious forces are driving all natures to draw together for 'co-operation or death', it is absolutely essential that the human consciousness should be impregnated with it until this indispensable principle becomes an axiom : that every faith has an equal right to live, and that there is an equal duty incumbent upon every man to respect that which his neighbour respects.<sup>5</sup>

But good intentions alone do not always lead to happy results ; we have in addition to be convinced that the high aim of true union of man with man which these great souls have in view stands a fair chance of being realized by putting their principles into practice, or, if such an experiment is at all called for in the true interest of human welfare.

If religion like art were essentially a thing of the mind bestowal of meticulous care on the preservation of all religions of the world would have then amounted to a civilized measure of rare quality. But religion differs from art in almost the same manner as life differs from it. The practical identity between life and religion is due to the fact that religion is at once a determining factor of life and determined by it while art cannot be said to be so determining a factor in relation to life. Life is restless, incomplete, ever-changing ; art is steady, complete, imperishable in the realm of beauty ; life is a reality, art is a dream. Religion becomes at times such a thing of dream for a small fraternity or for particular individuals. But that is neither normal nor of common occurrence. Normally religion is much more an expression of social and political facts and forces than that of the mind ; and just as complete non-interference in social and political affairs is impossible and unreal, so wholesale non-intervention in matters called religious is uncalled for inasmuch as the chief objective of religion, viz. ordered welfare in the wider social life of man, is thereby threatened. Man

5. *Life and Gospel of Vivekananda*—pp. 858-855.

is aged enough, and experienced enough too ; his experiences have taught him that dogmatism in matters of knowledge and truth is the height of folly. But if the new consciousness in him lands him in *laissez-faire* in religion he will not be avoiding fresh errors. The human mind grows consciously as well as unconsciously by actions and reactions of very many forces and events both friendly and unfriendly ; in the same way grows man's ability to grapple with reality. His contact with the wide world that is made possible through such actions and reactions is of immense significance for him. The non-disturbance and excusiveness attending the new order of things of Rolland's and Gandhi's contemplation may not rear in men the virile mentality that loves to seek and sift.

Perhaps it will be argued that national or cultural distinctions at least must remain unobliterated, else how will peoples recognize and understand one another ? This line of thinking also is defective : in it the past ages and to some extent the present undertake to represent all time to come. In the past various races and nations were nurtured in widely distant and inaccessible areas. That distance and non-acquaintance made their differences so pronounced. But the distance is now being annihilated and peoples' curiosity to know one another is gaining in momentum with the result that racial and national differences are being fast resolved without the races or nations being fully conscious of the happening. Accentuation of racial or national or cultural differences or 'types' even at this parting of ways in human history would mean predilection for the past and not for truth. Some thinkers cannot relish the uniformity that future societies are likely to assume because it will, they apprehend, be colourless and monotonous, in other words, shorn of all charm. But they will be reassured of plenty in colour and charm in respect of future human societies if they realize that man's mind now stands fettered to a large extent by differences and distinctions which are unnecessary and unmeaning, and that man's creative powers are vastly undeveloped yet.

Religion is a variety of knowledge : it is by forgetting this basic fact that we get into unseemly fear of problems called religious. Human knowledge has increased by observation and experience through ages, and with that increase has religion, i. e. knowledge transmuted into conviction, gained in quality. The influence in our time of scientific reasoning and discoveries on the religions of the world points unmistakably to the same truth. In all other spheres of our lives we cannot afford, with impunity, to be less attentive to the free play of the spirit of enquiry and human welfare ; in the sphere of religion too we must not dare to blunt the edge of the vital question : Is it true ? Is it good ? Ramakrishna and Gandhi too, reveal, when viewed in action, that they have taken particular care to shed egoism as thoroughly as is humanly possible, and thus equipped they tread firmly the paths they have discovered for themselves, ( and paths are always discovered, they are never found ready-made ), and they do not allow themselves to be worried much by the consideration as to who comes in for even hard knocks from them in their progress onward.

So we are led to think that the 'mantram' ( the directive ) of human good and reason in preference to fondness for the past or the present, which Rammohun offered to his countrymen on his realization of the new possibilities of human civilization, has not been appreciated by them sufficiently, for no inherent defect of the 'mantram' itself but for their own failure to prize truth as such and as conducive to the greater good of their people.

Rammohun's treatment of the Hindu theology is so brilliant, so well-informed and so well-reasoned, that the modern Bengalees' apathy towards it may not indicate, necessarily, their intellectual advance. Some of Rammohun's interpretations are strikingly new as that of the following lines of the Gita :

*Na buddhibhedam janayedajnanam karmasanginam  
Yojayet sarvakarmani vidvan yuktah samacharan.*

The wise man must not upset the understanding of the ignorant given to rites and ceremonies ( for gaining mundane and heavenly happiness ). He, the non-attached worker, should set them to various activities by his own example.

The lines are widely held to mean that religious rites and ceremonies of the masses, such as image-worship, must not be criticised by the elite, as the masses in that case may find themselves carried beyond their depth. But Rammohun interprets the lines thus :

The wise man should set the ignorant to work by showing them his own example, so that, the non-attached way of work of the wise man may lead the ignorant to a similar course of activities. As the wise man is precluded from performing rites and ceremonies for gain ( of mundane and heavenly happiness ), the ignorant also will, for their inner purification, be inclined to the non-attached way of action by seeing the wise man's doings. The Gita indicates clearly in many places as to how people should engage themselves in work :

You are entitled to action only and not to the result. Work done for the sake of gain ( of mundane and heavenly happiness ) and not for God, leads to bondage.

And to quote from another source ( *Bhagavat Purana* ) :

The wise man will not advise the ignorant to take to rites and ceremonies ( for gaining mundane and heavenly happiness )

Just as a good physician will not allow unsuitable diet to a patient even though he ( the patient ) may yearn for it.<sup>7</sup>

#### RAMMOHUN AND CHRISTIANITY

In the introduction to his *Precepts of Jesus—a Guide to Peace and Happiness* Rammohun indicates that he has not come across in any other religious book so full and helpful a moral precept as the following saying of Jesus :

Do unto others as you would like to be done by ;  
and he assigns, for this reason, to the Bible the highest place among

6 Heaven, according to Hindus, is not eternal but for a duration only.

7 Bengali Works—page 215.

religious books. But this Bible of his is shorn of mysteries such as the Trinity, the Vicarious Atonement, etc. The orthodox lovers of the Bible could not, as is to be expected, be pleased with such an admirer of the Holy Writ ; and their displeasure led Rammohun to carry on laborious researches in Christian theology for three years and the publication in succession of the three *Appeals to the Christian Public* bristling with quotations from the Greek and the Hebrew sources. The Christian world of the time was amazed at his scholarship.

We do not unfortunately know what the Christians of modern times think about Rammohun's labours in regard to their religious thought. But his own countrymen must not value them less. These discourses of his show unambiguously that he considered the life actuated by love and fellow-feeling towards one another to be the one that is desirable.

#### RAMMOHUN HIMSELF

In his discourses on Christianity Rammohun presents himself as a follower of Christ while in his *Tuhfat-ul-Muwabbinin* he admits no one to be a messenger of God in the accepted sense of the term nor any book to be of divine origin. Expert opinion on him is therefore practically unanimous that he was an uncompromising rationalist in his early youth, but went over in maturer years to rationalism controlled by faith, which he considered conducive to human welfare.

But there is scope for doubting the validity of the conclusion. In his discourses on Hindu scriptures Rammohun is found to be equally a staunch Hindu reviewing and systematizing the tenets of his religion in the light of the Vedanta, the supreme authority for the Hindu. And yet in his famous letter to Lord Amherst in which he advocates the introduction of European sciences into India he speaks of the difficulties of mastering Sanskrit and ridicules the teachings of the Vedanta, the Mimamsa and the Nyaya. It may perhaps be maintained that he ridicules in the

letter not the real teachings of the Vedanta, the Mimansa and the Naya, but the popular ideas about them. Even then it must be admitted that he prefers modern European learning to the scholasticism of his fathers. He values the Bible a little more no doubt, but that in his approach to it he does not lay by his rationalism will be borne out by the following facts : firstly : he collected and published the *Precepts of Jesus-A Guide to Peace and Happiness* from the Bible with the object in view that these simple ethical directives, shorn of mysteries, would help men in general to arrive at a better conception of the Author of the universe and would regulate better their relation with one another and their conduct in society ; in his *Tubfat-ul-Muwabhidin* too he makes a similar remark in respect of the efficacy of reason which is ingrained in man :

As the foundation of faiths is based on the truth of the existence of the soul . . . and on the existence of the next world . . . men are to be excused in admitting and teaching the doctrine of the existence of the soul and the next world ( although the real nature of both is hidden ) for the sake of the welfare of the people, as they simply, for the fear of punishment in the next world and of the penalties inflicted by the earthly authorities, refrain from the commission of illegal deeds. But as an appendage to the belief in these two indispensable doctrines, hundreds of useless hardships and privations regarding eating and drinking, purity and impurity, auspiciousness and inauspiciousness, etc. have been added, and thus they have become causes of injury and detrimental to social life and sources of trouble and bewilderment to the people, instead of tending to the amelioration of the condition of society.

Notwithstanding implicit faith in the orders of the . . . doctors of religion, there is always such an innate faculty existing in the nature of mankind that in case any person of sound mind, before or after assuming the doctrines of any religion, makes an impartial and just enquiry into the nature of the principles of religious doctrines, of different nations, there is a strong hope that he will be able to distinguish the truth from untruth and true propositions from fallacious ones, and also he, becoming free from the useless restraints of religion, which sometimes become sources of prejudice of one against another

and causes of physical and mental troubles, will turn to the One Being Who is the fountain of the harmonious organisation of the universe, and will pay attention to the good of society.

Secondly, his opponents tried to impress on him that no one could be a true man of faith till he believed in the mysteries of Christianity, but Rammohun tried to show that whatever was miraculous or extraordinary in Jesus was by the grace of God, that he relied on God wholly, and that it could be proved from the Bible that all Divine commandments aimed at teaching men their duties to one another.

We would therefore hold that Rammohun's stand on monotheism shorn of mysteries, and on the good of humanity, which he took in his *Tuhfat-ul-Muwabbidin* of his early youth, did not undergo any material change in his maturer years. Those who are rather anxious to see this change in him have not perhaps noticed the striking trait in him that in his *Tuhfat* too he is at once a keen rationalist and an instinctive lover of God and fellow-men.

Rammohun was a great friend of the Unitarians prior to his sojourn in England after which he cultivated acquaintance with the Trinitarians as well and had his intimate friends in both the groups. Some clergymen stated after his death that he had been progressing towards Trinitarianism and a longer life would have very probably left him a convinced Trinitarian. The editor of Miss Collett's biography of Rammohun has not attached importance to this view, although he has expressed the opinion that religious fervour, which was never weak in Rammohun, drove him in his early youth to free-thinking and turned him later on to faith when he had been convinced of the insufficiency of reason. The editor adduces the following in support of his contention : Rammohun in his last writing supported colonization in India by upper class Europeans ; he examined at length the arguments for and against the proposal, and one of his arguments in support of the proposal runs thus : Indians would benefit much by such a colonization and specially

from their contact with the cultured Europeans. These ameliorated Indians and Europeans may in time combine to sever their connection with the British ; yet commercial connection would be kept up between these two peoples and India, thus enlightened, would be the vanguard of Asia's progress. To quote Rammohun's words :

Americans were driven to rebellion by mis-government...The mixed community of India, as long as they were treated liberally and governed in an enlightened manner, will feel no inclination to cut off its connection with England...yet if events should occur to effect a separation, still a friendly and highly advantageous commercial connection may be kept up between two free and Christian countries, united as they will then be by resemblance of language, religion and manners.

The editor's conclusion from all this that Rammohun contemplated the conversion of his people to Christianity, does not seem to be warranted for the following reasons : firstly, the upper class Europeans who would colonize in India would be Christians and the leading citizens of India, and as such the whole country might loosely be termed Christian by Rammohun ; secondly, India, then progressing under the influence of his favourite Christian principle "Do unto others as you would like to be done by" might be called Christian by him ; thirdly, Rammohun did not perhaps abhor his people's conversion to the improved religion of Jesus inasmuch as he desired keenly their change from their sorry plight to anything better ; but that such a conversion would not please him either, is fairly evident from the following extract from his reply to Bishop Ware of America :

I am led to believe from reason, what is set forth in the scripture that "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him," in whatever form of worship he may have been taught to glorify God.

There is yet another point to note in this reply of his to Bishop Ware. He was questioned about the prospects of Christianity,



in India, and his reply was : Indians might appreciate Christianity in time if attempts were first made to teach them Science, English Literature and Christian morality unmingled with religious doctrines.

And we are led now to the fundamental question : What exactly were the nature and scope of Rammohun's reforms or what was his own particular ideology. We would at first attend to what Tagore and Dr. Brojendranath Seal, two of his outstanding followers, have to say on the point.

No contemporary of Rammohun, says Tagore, could conceive the oneness of humanity so fully as Rammohun did ; ours is the age of close international co-operation and Rammohun takes his stand on all that is of abiding value in the culture and traditions of his own people and stretches out the hand of fellowship to other cultures and traditions of the world. Tagore's estimation of Rammohun is true no doubt, though we would not call Rammohun the solitary realizer in his age of the unity of humanity as the great Goethe, who was his older contemporary, declared himself a *welt-kind* ( world-child ) even in his early youth, and his thorough-going internationalism of maturer years is too well-known. Besides, the internationalism of Rammohun, who was overjoyed to hear of the liberation of the people of distant Spain and gave a public dinner at his own expense to celebrate the occasion and who cursed the oppressors of Naples, with these burning words :

I consider the cause of the Neopolitans as my own and their enemies as ours. Enemies to liberty and friends of despotism have never been, and never will be, ultimately successful

was much more genuine and vital than what is commonly known as co-operation among nations.

Dr. Seal's estimation of Rammohun is highly captivating—rich in imaginative thought. To him Rammohun is the greatest exponent of religions and cultures of the world. The various

religions and cultures of nations are, according to him, each a particular expression of universalism, each is true in its own way, but each must aim at the highest development it is capable of. Rammohun, according to him, tried to indicate the way of that fulfilment for each one of them.—‘We have already known this line of thought in a slightly different garb. Prof. Radhakrishnan expresses the position thus :

...If we believe that every type means something final, incarnating a unique possibility ; to destroy a type will be to create a void in the scheme of the world.

We have given our estimation of the view. These thinkers have not kept before them the aspects of religion or culture which we have to deal with in our everyday lives ; their religion or culture is a thing of the domain of ideas—and a ‘type’ from that standpoint may pretty safely be considered ever-enduring.

The line of thought merits further examination. Exclusivist thinkers like Prof. Radhakrishnan have found in the caste system of India the ancients’ laudable endeavour to preserve India’s heterogeneous ethnic entities. They may be partly right ; but we have to be mindful of the outcome of the endeavour as well. That India fell largely on account of her loose-knit social structure has been the verdict of a number of serious scholars. Neither could these component parts of Indian humanity thrive in their exclusive ways : the Brahmins of Rammohun’s days were hard put to it by the reformer’s quotations from the Upanishads, which they took to be his own composition. And, further, these disintegrated parts of Hinduism could be revitalized and charged by Dayanandas and Vivekanandas alone who made no secret of their enmity towards such exclusiveness.

The philosophy of exclusivism sins most in generating non-acquaintance among fellow-men and consequent non-love, and it thwarts curiosity, the mother of creation. Loss of indivi-

duality is perhaps no problem in the domain of creativeness : Persia had to yield completely to Arabia, and yet Persia did not lose herself. As for individuals, we have the example of our Madhusudan who went over unreservedly to European traditions, and yet he suffered neither as a Bengalee nor as a man, rather he seems to have gained by his attempted self-effacement. Rammohun is called a true child of the ancient Indian seers ; but his endeavours have constantly been directed less to the nurturing of the ego or individuality and more to the abnegation of it and warm acceptance of truth from wherever it comes.

We would try in vain, so it seems, to label Rammohun by any of the old denominations ; Hindu, Muslim or Christian. He was an instinctive seeker after truth and the world's great are known by that plain appellation. But this instinctive seeking also leads to different domains of thought and action—to religion, social reform, philosophy, science, etc. To which of them belongs Rammohun ? Life is an undivided entity and as such a gifted man may at one and the same time be a man of faith, a social reformer, a philosopher or a scientist all in one. Still he has a pronounced bent— what was Rammohun's ?

Historically Rammohun is the founder of a religious fraternity, although he never claimed to be reckoned as such. But every thinker is a new creator, because the world is ever new ; so Rammohun may be considered an usherer of a new ideology or way of life in spite of his disclaimer. Modern intellectuals of Bengal seem to view him more as a social reformer with high intellectual gifts than as a religious man, because, they seem to miss in him, the great controversialist, that calm resignation to the power beyond which is the *sine qua non* of religious life. This view is of course superficial as it fails to take note of Rammohun's steadfast devotion to human good from which sprang all his polemics. And we should in this connection remind ourselves of Rammohun's famous saying : If religion belongs to God, does politics belong to Satan ?

The fraternity of which he was the founder is largely pietistic at present. But Rammohun's conception of religious life was much more comprehensive, and novel too, in some respects. Firstly, he was not very particular about evolving a theology or metaphysics of his own. He preached monotheism no doubt and was averse to atheism, but that he was not over-punctilious about them is illustrated by the following : he opposed Hindu image-worship, because, in his view, "Hindu idolatry more than any other pagan worship, destroys the texture of society" ; but when his opponents disputed that they did not worship the idols as such, rather, they worshipped in the idols the various powers and attributes of God, Rammohun did not accept their statement as conforming to fact, yet conceded that such an allegorical interpretation of idolatry was a happy sign of the time. And, his intimacy with the Trinitarians in England was, we are inclined to hold, actuated by the consideration that he found their ways of life good in spite of their beliefs which he could not endorse. Secondly, he practised the old religious exercises of the Sufis and Yogins as a means only to have his mind and body toned up, but he dedicated his mind and body thus disciplined and energized to the pursuit and propagation of knowledge and the service of man ; in other words to improving as best as he could the lot of the people among whom Providence had placed him. His unswerving perseverance on that account in activities such as the suppression of harmful ancient customs, introduction of an improved system of education, freedom of the press, economic uplift of the downrodden peasantry, improvement in the dispensation of public justice, are widely known. Only the pity is that the value of such activities—this life-giving perennial religion, and prized as such by fortunate nations—has gripped the imagination of our leaders of thought and action so rarely.

Goethe, according to Croce, had an extraordinary development of mental powers quite early in life and maintained it throughout. The same is true of Rammohun also. His brains show an amazing maturity in his early production *Tuhfat-ul-*

*Muwahhidin*. All his subsequent polemical discourses may be viewed as so many attempts on his part to smooth out the bends and twists of human reason. We run indeed the risk of missing his full stature if we fail to appraise him in these two outstanding expressions of his genius: his intellectual powers in his *Tuhfat* and his love of man and capacity for work as revealed in his humanitarian and reformist endeavours.

## **TAGORE AND THE ARTIST'S PERSONALITY**

*By* PRAFAS JIBAN CHAUDHURY

Is ART AN expression of the artist's personality ? Or is it free from the latter ? This question has widely been discussed in the West, but it does not occur in Indian aesthetics. Tagore has thought upon this question and the solution he has offered is marked by thoroughness and profundity. He has related this aesthetic problem with the evolution of the human self ; and his idea of human personality is deeper and more comprehensive than that of the Western aestheticians in general.

The opinion about poetry, popular in the West, is that its function is to express feelings, and that adequate expression is beauty. In the expressive activity, the poet is but an instrument ; like an actor he momentarily identifies himself with various feelings, and expresses them as if they were his own. The poet's sincerity is passing, rather, it is but a pretension to sincerity. The readers, while reading a poem, assume it to be the expression of the poet's own experience ; but when, on the basis of the poem, they form an idea of the poet's personality, they generally fail, for a true poet does not express his personality. Thus the critics who tried to reconstruct the personality of Shakespeare on the basis of the poet's works came to grief. They invented quite a number of Shakespeares amongst whom there was more dissimilarity than similarity. Analysis seems to show that a great poet has nothing to call his own ; he does not express in his poetry any particular type of personality or any particular thought-feeling pattern. Rather, he identifies himself with all kinds of personalities, thoughts and feelings, and expresses them with equal felicity and ( apparent ) sincerity. Thus one cannot say whether Shakespeare was a pessimist or an optimist, an atheist or a theist, a fatalist or a believer in free-will. For

Shakespeare has felt and expressed these different antithetical attitudes with equal power and seeming sincerity. For this capacity in Shakespeare for depersonalising himself ( as a poet ) Keats holds him to be the greatest of all poets. Keats calls this capacity, "Negative Capability." He writes :

"And at once it struck me what quality went to form a man of achievements, especially in literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason."<sup>1</sup> Again,

"As to the Poetic character itself it is not itself—it has no self, it is everything and nothing. It has no character—it enjoys light and shade ; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated. It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous Philosopher, delights the Chameleon poet."<sup>2</sup>

Thus a great poet, according to Keats, has no fixed set of beliefs or ways of thinking and feeling, in a word, he has no personality. Poetry, therefore, has no philosophy to express, no message to communicate. Keats did not like Wordsworth's philosophising poetry ; he wrote, "poetry should have no palpable design upon us." He liked the dramatic technique in poetry best, for in this a poet can be most impersonal. T. S. Eliot<sup>3</sup> also holds the same view ; poetry, he says, does not offer a poet a scope for expression of his personality, rather, it demands from him rigorous depersonalisation. A poet should be self-sacrificing, not self-expressive. A poet, like a catalyst in a chemical action, brings about the action ( combination of thoughts and feelings ) but does not combine his self with the products of the reaction, ( the poem ). Croce<sup>4</sup> too believes in this poetic impersonality. To the question, "Is a poet then insincere ?", he replies that

1 Letter to George and Thomas Keats, 28 Dec. 1817.

2 Letter to Woodhouse, 27 Oct., 1817.

3 *Tradition and Individual Talent*.

4 *Aesthetics*, Chap. VI.

aesthetic sincerity consists in giving adequate expression to momentary intuitions ; it has no ethical side.

One corollary to this poetic impersonality is that, poetry being impersonal, has a wide appeal ; the depersonalisation makes art approach the condition of science. Disinterestedness in art is a means to facilitate its communication.

The theory discussed above, one that is current in the West, may be summed up in these terms :

1. In good poetry personality is not revealed.
2. That is why good poetry has a wide appeal ; the problem of communication is very much simplified in this case.
3. Poetry, not being the expression of the poet's own personality, is not sincere in the ethical sense, but in aesthetics this insincerity is no fault, but a virtue.

Tagore's aesthetic doctrines are, however, quite different. According to him :

1. Poetry is the expression of a poet's personality.
2. Even when poetry has a wide appeal, the problem of communication is never acute ; for the poet's personality is not exclusive but inclusive.
3. Since the poet expresses his own personality in his poetry, the latter does not lack sincerity in the ethical sense.

So that the difference between Tagore's views and those current in the West ( on the problem of poetic personality ), is fundamental. We shall now examine this in detail.

We have first to see what Tagore meant by personality. By personality he meant the mental life of a man.

"Where is the mental life of a man ? It is there where our intelligence and feelings, desire and experience, all have melted and mixed into a perfect unity, where our intelligence, will and taste, work harmoniously together, in a word, where resides the essential man. It is there that literature is born."<sup>5</sup> This essential man is revealed in his writings, ( if he is a literary artist ).

5 *Sahityer Pathe* : p. 168.



Tagore has called this personality "the essential character of an author,"<sup>6</sup> and holds it to be 'the true self' of the author,<sup>7</sup> his 'real individuality'.<sup>8</sup> He writes :

"In every man's thoughts and feelings there is a kind of unity which we know to be the root nature in him ; this is his unity of character."<sup>9</sup> This principle of unity in the mental processes of a man is not clearly perceptible ; it is mostly inferred from his conduct. But once we grasp this principle we have a knowledge about him and can predict how he will behave in certain circumstances.

Tagore holds that this personality of the author finds its expression in his writings. "Our study and observation, our conversation and thinking, all put together make up for each one of us an essential character. According to this essential character we are either attached to the world or repelled by it, either nationalists or internationalists, worldly or spiritual, lovers of action or of thought. My particular character must be present in my writings either in a manifest or a hidden form. Whatever I may write, lyrics or anything else, I reveal thereby not merely a momentary mood of my mind ; the very truth of my inner being impresses its mark on them."<sup>10</sup>

We generally think that a dramatist least reveals himself in his works. But Tagore says :

"That each of Shakespeare's dramatic progenies has got a clear individuality does not mean that they have no element of Shakespeare's character in them".<sup>11</sup> Again, "With the poetry of Dante the poet's life is indissolubly mixed up ; if we read the two together we can better appreciate and respect each".<sup>12</sup>

The personality that is expressed through a poet's works is

6 *Ibid* : p. 166.

7 *Ibid* : p. 168.

8 *Sahitya*. p. 68.

9 *Sahityer Pathe*, p. 169.

10 *Ibid* : p. 164.

11 *Ibid* : pp. 168-64.

12 *Sahitya*. p. 168.

the real one and truer than that which we try to know through studying his life and manners or his philosophical views.

"In other words, where resides the essential man, there does literature take its birth. Man reveals himself in various circumstances in little fragments. These fragmentary parts of him construct his philosophy, science and similar things. The observant part of a man makes science, his thoughtful part writes philosophy, but the whole of him creates literature".<sup>13</sup>

That this integral and essential man is revealed through his poetry, Tagore says in such strong terms as these :

"The readers of Valmiki have constructed a ( mythical ) biography of the poet on the basis of his poetry ; this biography is truer than the actual life-history of the poet".<sup>14</sup>

Now, this personality is not always to be grasped and isolated from the literary works that subtly reveal it. Tagore admits this and says that it is not also necessary ; what is required is to feel and recognise the presence of this personality.<sup>15</sup> The truth of this personality is the truth of literature, the latter being but the expression of the former.<sup>16</sup> Literature is nothing but the record of truths realised by man and this truth is essentially about his own self, for the self pervades and colours all nature, inner and outer.<sup>17</sup>

We have to enquire now as to why is it that the personality of the true poet (as a poet) ever eludes our grasp. Because it so eludes, many Western critics have denied its existence altogether. But Tagore, we have seen, firmly believes in it. And Tagore has given the reason for our general incapacity to grasp this poetic personality. He considers that a great poet has a large and comprehensive personality which assimilates and absorbs all narrower and fragmentary personalities. Thus

<sup>13</sup> *Sahityer Pathe*, p. 163-64.

<sup>14</sup> *Sahitya* p. 164-

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid* : p. 166.

<sup>16</sup> *Sahityer Pathe* ; p. 164-65.

<sup>17</sup> *Sahityer Svarup*, p. 68.

a great poet reaches to a point of view which is so high that from it he can see and understand all his fellow beings. If we do not rise up to him and see all things through his eyes we can never hope to understand him. A critic is generally an ordinary man with a limited personality ( though possessing much intelligence ), and he fails to comprehend the larger and more inclusive personality of a great poet. Tagore says :

“It is because of this that in a great writing it is difficult to find a particular theory or a narrow unity. If ordinary critics like us, try to comprehend a great work with the help of our own private opinions, we may find it involved in self-contradictions at every step. But at a certain central place, very difficult for us to reach, does rest a broad solution, that is the heart of the author. In most cases this is an undiscovered region even to the author himself. It is difficult to search out any individuality in Shakespeare’s writings just because it is a large individuality. The essential principle that he has developed in his own nature cannot be bound and fixed by a few well-knit doctrines. Therefore we have an illusion that there may not be any unified personality of the author in his writings”.<sup>18</sup>

Thus we see that ( according to Tagore ), because Shakespeare’s personality is very ~~comprehensive~~, we generally fail to perceive the principle of unity in it; there is so much variety in him due to his wide sympathy and rich humanity that we lose sight of the thread of unity that holds together this variety. Tagore believes that a great author attains through his power of imagination the all-inclusive personality of the ideal human spirit or the universal soul. He says :

“When the individual self of an author identifies itself with the great human self through sympathy, then upon his nature does the universal spirit put its stamp. The personality of a good dramatist and the human nature outside it combine so harmoniously that it is hard to separate them.”<sup>19</sup>

18 *Salvtyer Pathe* p. 168.

19 *Ibid* : p. 168.

Tagore has said that a great author has a large individuality ; he means to say that, while not losing his individual character, a great author yet maintains a very comprehensive ( not exclusive but inclusive ) humanity.

“Great authors, according to their respective width of sympathy, can so reflect objects of the world that it is scarcely possible to decide how much of the external world and how much of his own self are there in his works. A shallow and exclusive kind of imagination, however, cannot but give prominence to its particular character in whatever it tries to express.”<sup>20</sup>

And a great writer, because he has a more inclusive outlook, gives a truer account of things than an ordinary one.

“In him there is a high philosophical stand-point from which he can see the most pervasive features of human nature.”<sup>21</sup>

In order to understand the personality of a great author we have to rise up to him. It is no use finding contradictions in his writings and concluding from these that he has no character, no personality to express, that he is like a chameleon or Proteus. It should be the business of a critic to see how he can best resolve these contradictions which are apparent only ; apparent, because they appear only to one who has a narrow and exclusive outlook on life, whose mind is packed with ready-made theories and beliefs not general enough to subsume or take into account all the rich variety of human phenomena. A wider reading of the book of nature with a more open mind would perhaps enable such critics to appreciate the innate harmony to be found in the writings of great authors.

We can now see the secret of universality enjoyed by great works of literature. We ask : if literature is the expression of an author's personality, how can others appreciate it ? But now we can guess the solution of this problem of communication. For we find that a great author so enlarges his personality as to attain a very comprehensive

20 *Ibid* : p. 168.

21 *Ibid* : p. 170.

humanity. Thoughts and feelings of universal mankind find a faithful expression in his writings ; he is therefore understood and appreciated universally. Shakespeare knew by love and insight the hearts of men and women of all ranks and could reveal them through his art, which, therefore, has an universal appeal. Tagore would say that Shakespeare's personality absorbed within itself the different smaller personalities whom he depicted so vividly and truthfully in his plays. In terms of Liebniz's monadology we may say that a great author is a more enlightened, developed and active monad that intuitively and reflects the less developed, comparatively confused and passive monads.<sup>22</sup> The truth of literature, according to Tagore, is the truth of human nature ; and if an author has enlarged his individual self to comprehend within itself the whole of rich humanity, then the literature he creates, while remaining a product of his sincere self-expression, yet contains essential and universal human truth which will be widely appreciated for all times. Thus Tagore reconciles the apparent contradiction between the statements that good literature is a product of self-expression of an author and that its appeal is universal. His solution, we have just seen, rests on a deeper conception of a great author's self or personality.

Now we can solve ( after Tagore ) the third problem connected with an author's personality. It is the problem of artistic sincerity. Keats, Croce and T. S. Eliot ( among others ) do not believe in this sincerity ; for them an author momentarily identifies himself with certain thoughts and feelings and has no loyalty to these afterwards. But Tagore holds that a great author must be sincere ; he does not simply play with thoughts and feelings but lives them. These are the expressions not of his passing moods but of his very personality<sup>23</sup> which he brings to bear upon his creative work. Whoever reads him touches him. Tagore regards Shakespeare as a great poet

22 R. Latta's *Monadology*, p. 105.

23 *Sahityaer Pathe*, p. 164.

because he did not write essays on human nature like Bacon but lived in the human characters he created.<sup>24</sup> A great philosopher's personality is not involved in his writings but a great poet's is ; therefore, the former may not be sincere but the latter must necessarily be. It is not mere sympathy nor imagination that enables a great author to express human nature ; such faculties are possessed by most men. Through continual exercise of these faculties they acquire a certain permanent character which is the real cause of their spontaneous and truthful expression of humanity. This character is but a comprehensive personality—a self that intuits or reflects other selves with facility because it encompasses them. So that there need not be any lack of sincerity in a great author when he is depicting thoughts and feelings ( apparently ) not his own. He owns them really ; for he lives the characters he depicts, not momentarily or casually like an actor in a play, but often and seriously too. “The characters are his progenies ; he is their father, and there is a deep relation between them”—so says Tagore.<sup>25</sup> Thus does Tagore solve the problem of sincerity in literature and reconciles it with the obvious fact that an author expresses such diverse thoughts and feelings and depicts with equal facility such a variety of characters. Tagore's solution, in brief, is that these diversities can be unified in a really great personality which may express itself faithfully in literature.

The above discussion of the problem of an artist's personality will remain incomplete if we do not clarify at least one philosophical implication of the solution offered by Tagore. We see that Tagore believes in the individuality of an author, yet he considers that a great author, in his comprehensiveness, attains universality. Tagore's doctrine may appear to a logical mind to be self-contradictory. But it is an alogical truth which he got from the Upanishads and preached all his life. The central thesis of the Upanishads is that the self is really the

24 *Ibid* : p. 168

25 *Ibid* : p. 168.

universal spirit ; only due to our ignorance it ( the self ) thinks itself to be circumscribed and fragmentary, i. e., individual or an ego. This individual self can develop itself and attain the state of *Brahman*, the sole reality that is spiritual. Tagore has preached this doctrine in many of his writings, notably in *Sādhana*. When applied to aesthetics, this doctrine solves the problem of artistic personality, viz. how an artist, while sincerely expressing his own self, can yet enjoy universality, that is, how he can at once be an individual and a universal man. Tagore's solution is this :

“Just as we find that the stronger the imagination the less is it merely imaginary and more in harmony with truth, so we see the more vigorous our individuality the more does it widen towards the universal. For the greatness of personality is not in itself but in its content, which is universal, just as the depth of a lake is judged not by the size of its cavity but by the depth of its water.”<sup>26</sup>

The more comprehensive the personality of an author, the more sincere, and so, more universal will be his art ; yet there will be no lack of individuality in it. The individual self is continually growing and assimilating the universe outside, because the latter is not really a stranger to the former. The union of this individual spirit with the universal spirit gives man joy which is expressed in literature.<sup>27</sup> The more the individual enlarges itself the more does it know but itself, its real extension and depth, and, so, the truer and more significant becomes the content of literature that issues from such a self-enlargement and self-knowledge. The external universe of mere things becomes humanised when the individual human mind comprehends it and draws it within itself. This humanised universe becomes a human possession and serves as a rich material of art.<sup>28</sup> Literature expresses but the universal man ; the individual author,

<sup>26</sup> *Sādhana* p. 59.

<sup>27</sup> *Sahityer Pathe* : p. 70.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid* : p. 167

through his comprehensive nature, expresses this universal spirit, he is, in fact, at one with this spirit. Tagore has, in some places,<sup>29</sup> described this universal spirit as if it was a strange influence and not his own spirit, and as if he, as an author, had just been an instrument in the hands of this great spirit ( Plato's Eros ). But this does not mean that he revoked his own philosophy of the essential identity of the individual and the universal ; he only poetically expressed in such places ( mentioned above ) the wonder and awe an author feels when he finds, in certain moments of inspiration, the working of the universal spirit in his individual soul. It is his own soul, enlarged and become all-inclusive, that appears at times to be a strange influence.

29 *Atmaparichaya*. p. 1, p. 4,





## REVIEWS OF BOOKS, BOOK NOTES

*Bhagavad Gita* : Translated by SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA & CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD. The Marcel Rodd Co., Hollywood.

THIS attractively bound, pocket-size, volume is the third printing (1947) of a new translation of the Gospel of India, originally brought out in 1944. In their preface the translators, an Indian Swami and a Western student of Vedanta, explain the *motifs* of their work. Their dominant aim has been to render this ancient classic readable to the modern man. Judged from that point of view the book must be pronounced a remarkable achievement of a happy collaboration. To bring out the varied aspects and the several distinct tones of the original, they have taken the liberty of adopting a variety of styles, partly prose, partly verse, in their translation. The narrative and expository portions of the book are rightly rendered in prose, while in the more intimate self-revelations of the Incarnate God and the ecstatic responses of the devotee, Teacher and disciple both break out into simple verse. These indications of variety and distinctness in tone and message give a freshness to this familiar, word-worn text. Nor is the translation aimed at a pedantically literal one. The great classical commentaries on the Gita have been drawn upon and their explanations of certain difficult passages incorporated in the text itself, which is thus more interpretative than literal. A very lucid explanation of the cosmology of the Gita, given in an Appendix, helps in the understanding of the philosophical and psychological background of the Gita and of key words and ideas of the original which are retained. The historical background is ably sketched in a brief prefatory note.

In a very significant introduction, Aldous Huxley commends the Gita as "one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made." He goes on to expound the fundamentals of this Perennial Philosophy, which forms the Highest Common Factor of all the great faiths of mankind. At a time when it is more imperatively necessary than ever before for mankind to draw together in a clear understanding of our common condition and in a joint endeavour to realize our common goal, the translators have done a great service in presenting a new version of this ancient scripture, which has been rightly described as "the focus of all Indian religion." And so we can heartily join in the tribute of gratitude paid by Aldous Huxley to the translators for giving us "a version which can be read, not merely without that dull aesthetic pain inflicted by all too many English translations from the Sanskrit, but positively with enjoyment."

S. K. George.

*Mahatma Gandhi.* By JAWAHARLAL NEHRU : Signet Press, Calcutta.  
Rs. 9-8-0.

*Mahatma Gandhi.* By H. S. L. POLAK, H. N. BRAILSFORD and LORD  
PETHICK-LAWRENCE. Odhams Press, London. Rs. 10-8-0.

*The Story of Gandhiji.* BY KRISHNA HUTHEESINGH. Kutub, Bombay.

The spate of books about Gandhiji was inevitable ; much of it is very welcome. For it is only now, while memory is still fresh and strong, that the vivid impression of an unforgettable personality can be caught and fixed and that those who worked with him in all the vicissitudes of a crowded career may hope to do for future generations something of what Boswell did for our knowledge of Johnson. The rush of the current carries along with it, inevitably also, much rubbish ; one need not be greatly concerned for that—as the stream slackens the water will clear and the worthless material be forgotten.

The Signet Press has done a useful service by making this selection from the references to Gandhiji in Jawaharlal Nehru's writings. Extracts from the *Autobiography* and the *Discovery of India*, and, then more occasional material, have been so arranged as to form a most interesting picture of the impact of Gandhiji's ideas and work upon an extraordinarily alert and sensitive mind. The volume is well edited, very well illustrated, and attractively printed and bound ; it is announced that the proceeds from sale will go to the Gandhi National Memorial Fund.

Nehru's book is an illuminating commentary on Gandhiji's life, but in the nature of the case it is not in itself an account of that life, and it can only be read with full understanding by those who have an adequate knowledge of the facts. *Mahatma Gandhi*, by three of his English friends, and admirers, is planned to provide this information in convenient form. H. S. L. Polak, Gandhiji's chief English co-worker in his South African campaigns, writes of the first period of his life, up to the end of 1914. H. N. Brailsford describes the middle years from 1915 to 1939, covering the development of the national movement in India under Gandhi's leadership. Pethick-Lawrence describes the war years and the steps by which independence was finally achieved, during which he was himself in the closest touch with the negotiations. The result is a book which nobly fulfils its main purpose, that of providing its readers with the scaffolding of fact which they need before they can form any adequate conception of the unique personality of the man. Sm. Sarojini Naidu has contributed a moving introduction.

H. S. L. Polak's account of the South African campaign is a remarkably clear and able presentation of the situation and of Gandhi's impact upon it, rising at times to an eloquence all the more moving for its restraint. The section on "The Middle Years" is well balanced and shows great and sympathetic understanding, notably in the five chapters on Gandhi's "way of life." It is however marred by surprising mistakes (such as the statement on p. 142 that the spinning wheel has been retained on the flag of the Indian Union) and by superficial snap judgments like the condemnation of the Basic Education experiment on p. 216. The last section is most conscientiously written yet somehow fails to satisfy. One may recognize the great complexity of the events among which Gandhiji moved in his last years, and the need for giving full emphasis to the achievement of the political independence for which he had worked so long. One feels nevertheless that the man himself disappears for too long behind the web of political claim and counterclaim, and that too little space is given to the great concern for Hindu-Muslim unity which finally cost him his life. This is not to underrate the book as a record of essential facts, but merely to show that the time has not yet come when a fully-rounded presentation will be possible.

*The Story of Gandhiji* is an attempt to interest little children in this great life. Unfortunately it is both unworthy of its subject and unsuitable for its proposed readers. Writing for children is a skilled occupation; the pitfalls that await the unskilled are many, and have not been avoided. An even graver fault can be charged to the contents. In the name of "simplicity" important facts are in effect distorted (e. g. the account of the historic trial in 1922). Worst of all, in a book exalting this apostle of love, it is suggested that "hate for generations to come" is a proper attitude towards his tragically misguided but sincerely fanatical murderer. One can only hope that the choice of English for the narrative will effectively limit the number of its child readers.

Marjorie Sykes.

*Glimpses of Gandhiji.* By R. R. DIWAKAR: Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay :  
Price Re. 1-8 0.

Written by a devoted follower, associated with Gandhiji's programmes of work since their inception, this little book gives many intimate glimpses into the working of the mind of the Master. These glimpses are framed in a rapid survey of the march of events that transformed Gandhi the loyalist of 1918 into an arch rebel and finally the Father of the Nation, for which in the end he laid down his life. Sri Diwakar, as a co-

worker and co-prisoner, had many opportunities of coming into close contact with the Mahatma and to catch his mind at work. These glimpses are often very revealing, showing how unerringly Gandhiji's instinct led him to do or say the right thing at the right moment. Such, e. g., is the incident of his going on to the platform at an anti-untouchability conference but refusing to make a speech as he found on enquiry that no untouchable was present in the audience ! This was in 1918. The last glimpse of the living Master was two days before his martyrdom, cracking jokes even while engaged in earnest deliberations and taking far-reaching decisions. There are a few photographic glimpses also of the Mahatma at various stages of his great career.

Sardar Vallabhai Patel, in a brief foreword, commends the book.

S. K. G.

*Mahatma Gandhi : Pictorial History of a Great Life* : Collected, compiled, edited and published by Jan Baros. 2nd Enlarged Ed : Price Rs. 15-0-0

This unique collection of pictures, reproduced from photographs, covering the whole life of Mahatma Gandhi, from his birth in Porbandar, to his martyrdom and the memorable scenes thereafter, represents a new technique in the art of biography. It seeks to preserve and perpetuate for posterity, through pictures, the memory of one of whom generations to come will find it difficult to "believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth". It is the more remarkable and welcome as the production of a foreigner who, after years of sojourn in the land, came to sense something of the significance of the Mahatma's message, not only for this country but for all mankind.

The letter-press at the end of the volume gives a compact yet comprehensive survey of the events of the great career ; but it is the pictures, lovingly and laboriously collected and carefully and systematically arranged, that tell the story of the great life. Every period and phase of the epic career is faithfully depicted. The pictures are not all uniformly good, particularly the earlier ones, the original photographs having been poor or badly preserved. But no period is neglected and some of the pictures are rare and precious. It has been a great idea ably executed ; and we in India ought to be specially grateful to the author for bringing his skill and ability to render this service to the Nation and to mankind. It adds to the appeal of the book that its profits are to go to the Gandhi National Memorial Fund.

A book for possession and for presentation.

S. K. G.

*Rupadarsini*: The Indian Approach to the Human Form. By M. R. ACHAREKAR. Introduction By G. Venkatachalam. Rekha Publications, Bombay, 14, Lady Jamsheedji Road, Dadar. Price Rs 15-0-0.

This is a challenge to critics who continue to harp on the want of anatomy in Indian art. Its close analysis of the anatomical proportions that are generally kept hidden in the ancient art of India, will come as an eye-opener to many. The structure within the human figure was not unknown to Indian artists.

It is not surprisig that an artist from Bombay ( which has been, till lately, the stronghold of what is called the "western" school in India ), trained in the Royal College of Arts, London, should have taken up this controversy and dealt with it in the manner he has. He has argued his case with the help of a series of studies in pencil and may be said to have proved his case. His method of pairing classical figures with those of human 'models' has, however, its uses no less than its dangers.

The invention of the camera has created a new problem to the anatomically perfect art of Europe and its perspective. It has driven optical scientific perspective into mental perspective and bodily anatomy into the rhythms of physical and universal structure. The recent interest in the primitive and oriental arts should be seen in this light. But it is also time for us to take account of our own art and to understand the deeper motives of our art. This book is a step in that search. Its limitations should not blind us to its merits. This book, read along with such works as Abanindranath's *Sadanga* ( Indian Society of Oriental Arts, 1921 ) and Nandalal Bose's *Silpakatha* ( Visva-Bharati, 1944, a chapter from which, 'The Use of Anatomy in Painting, was published in Vol. XIV, Part I of this *Quarterly* ), will give one a fairly accurate idea of the Indian approach to the problem of the human form in art.

Ramkinkar

*Hound of the Heart*. By GURUDIAL MALLIK. With a foreword by Swami Ramdasji and Decorations by K. K. Hebbar. Nalanda Publications, Baroda. 104pp. 1948. Rs. 3-0-0.

The 'hound of the heart' is 'the unknown bird who comes to the closed cage and speaks a word of the limitless unknown.' It is, in the author's own words, the 'song-way of the spirit.' To those familiar with the inspired wisdom of the Bauls, the mystic depths of the Sufis and the loving faith of the Vaishnavas—this 'song-way' punctuated with its 'mile-stones' of

vision, will offer no hurdles. It is the traditional path of the seeker bent upon the eternal quest.

For one who has been moved and stirred by these songs, sung in their original Hindhusthani by the singer himself, it is not merely difficult, it is almost indelicate, to try to analyse them. How can one separate the singer from the song, the word of the mouth from the word of the heart, spiralling skyward of a crisp winter dawn. There let the songs reverberate and in the heart of a large number of friends to whom at times Gurdial Mallik has sung "out of the fullness of heart."

The sequence of eighty-three song-offerings are the "musical milestones" where the aspirant can pause and attune himself with the melody of the Flute which leads him on, step by step, where Krishna awaits His devotee. To give a typical example :

All my life I have been listening to the call of the world,  
but now I await Thy call, O Krishna.

Hitherto my life has been spent in weaving  
the web of illusion ; now, O Krishna,  
extricate me from the web.

I have all along walked in step with the world ;  
now, O Krishna, teach me how to  
walk in step with Thee.

Let now Thy name alone ring in my consciousness  
and let Thy lotus feet be my refuge.

It may well be expected that these songs, "like a breeze from heaven" will awaken and enlighten many an earnest seeker.

K. R.

*Thomas Paine : Selected Writings* : Edited and arranged with an Introduction by N. Gangulee : Nicholson & Watson : Price 8s. 6d.

It is a very timely production that Prof. Gangulee has brought out of selections from the writings of Thomas Paine. For Paine's ideas are as relevant to the revolutionary era in which we live today as they were in his own lifetime. If ever there was a stout-hearted advocate of the rights of man it was Thomas Paine. Not only was he the first to voice the common sense demand of independence for the American colonies, he was also a defender of the American constitution against violations of it by even its architects on coming into power. His severe indictment of George Washington, in a letter dated 1796, is a warning to fighters for freedom everywhere against succumbing to temptations to corruption when exalted to

positions of authority. Paine had the courage also to withstand the excesses of his associates in the French Revolution, endangering his own life by his outspokenness.

Thomas Paine is one of the heroes of human liberty, whose name ought to be far more widely known and revered than it is. To have been "the first of all men who proposed American independence ; suggested the Federal Union of States ; proposed the abolition of Negro slavery ; suggested the protection of dumb animals ; proposed arbitration and international peace ; advocated justice to women ; pointed out the reality of human brotherhood ; suggested international copyright : proposed the education of children of the poor at public expense and suggested a great republic of all the nations of the world", is certainly achievement enough to entitle a man to undying fame. Yet his name has been maligned by advocates of religion and politics, and everything was done during his lifetime and afterwards to blot out the memory of his services to humanity. Prof. Gangulee's edition of selections from his writings will go a long way in promoting a right understanding and estimation of this pioneer of human liberty. An introductory chapter gives a brief account of the life of this remarkable man and an estimate of his significance for the modern world. Then follow carefully selected and well arranged passages from his writings, divided into seven sections, and illustrating the wide range of his interests. These selections containing the fundamental ideas of one of the great pioneers of human liberty, ought to be of great interest at a time when that liberty has to be zealously guarded if it is to survive the dangers that threaten it at present.

S. K. George.

*The Story of a Dedicated Life* : 220+11 Pp. 1948. Rs. 3-0-0.

*The Ancient Quest* : By SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA. 130 Pp. 1947. Rs. 1-8-0.

*God and Divine Incarnations* : By SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA. 160 Pp. 1947. Rs. 2-4-0.

All the three books are published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, as Golden Jubilee Memorial Editions.

The first of the above three books is a life of Swami Ramakrishnananda, one of the direct disciples of the Paramahamsadeva, a life that was at once moving and consecrated absolutely to the cause of the new dispensation started by Swami Vivekananda. As the publishers have touchingly



expressed it, Swami Ramakrishnananda was "the *Vasuki* who held the Ramakrishna Order on his hood before it could find home in the hearts of men." He was the well-known Sashi familiar to all lovers of the Ramakrishna lore, whose uniqueness lay in his perfect combination of asceticism and dynamism, Jnana and Bhakti. It was he who started the nucleus of the work of the Order in the South, that home of the undefiled traditions of Hinduism, where it grew and blossomed under divine fostering. In the present biography, prefaced by a beautiful introduction from Sri P. N. Srinivasachari, a most well-documented account of the Swami's life and work has been told with devotion and charm. It is a moving drama, depicting, the luminous phases of the Swami's rich life. He loved solitude as much as he loved work and his devotion to Swami Vivekananda was real inspiration that informed all his relentless activities.

*The Ancient Quest* comprises of a selection of twelve lectures delivered by Swami Ramakrishnananda, during 1893-1911. While the central theme of these lectures is, as the title suggests, the Eternal Search of Man after the Ultimate Reality, carried on since the dawn of human awakening, the lecturer has envisaged all the dominant aspects of the Problem and discussed them in the light of the ancient spiritual teachings as interpreted by his personal sadhana. His expression has an immediacy that has a telling effect. His approach is synthetic and rational, untainted by narrow dogmatism and carries the force of his sincere conviction. Thus, seemingly contradictory contentions resolve themselves into a harmonious affirmation as one reads the whole book through.

The third book is 'an integrated compilation of the speeches and discourses of Swami Ramakrishnananda' on the cosmological problems of the Hindu view of life and the spirit. He sheds the light of investigation on this intriguing subject that was straight away dubbed as moonshine under the materialistic intellectualism of the West, and brings out the essential truth underlying the concepts of *avataravada*. His interpretation of the seven of the major avatars, viz., the Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana and, lastly, the intriguing Krishna Avatars is a very interesting piece of speculative literature on the subject. He characterises them as the evidences of stages in human evolution. Every reader interested in cosmology will love to read this book.

M. Bajpai.

*Tales and Parables of Sri Ramakrishna* : Published by Sri Ramkrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. 1947 ( Second Edition ). 273 Pp. Rs. 3-8-0.

It is a truism that the great truths of religion and mystical realisations acquire a homely charm when garbed in the language of fables and parables. Thus, the spiritual masters of all times and climes employed the allegorical or the symbolic method of communication to drive home the truths of their teachings to the aspirant masses. This method invested their imagery with a suggestiveness as subtle as the contents were profound. The present volume is a selection of just such tales and parables of Sri Ramakrishna, the master *par excellence* of the art of making the abstruse appear familiar, the abstract real and palatable. Countless were the flowers and fruits in his basket that he produced according to the needs of the aspirant. His style of narration is inimitable and marked by the story-teller's art and ease and vividness. His anecdotes, drawn from the common, work-a-day atmosphere of domestic or community life reveal his keen observation, his innate sense of humour, his guileless simplicity and his incisive wit. He would tear clean through the histrionic pretences of the human drama with his genial irony, in order to reveal the veiled motives of our actions. Even well-known stories retold by him acquired a fresh significance. Besides the spiritual wealth that these tales and parables embody, and the enchanting figure of the Master they reveal, they also illustrate a typically Indian genius that is universal in its appeal because it is so truly Indian.

The publishers have classified the tales and parables under broad headings, though the reader has been justly warned against taking this division too rigidly ; the stories often inter-penetrate in their import. The Introduction contains a fascinating account of the Master's life and teachings and the collection includes more than two hundred stories and parables. It is a book for every body.

M. Bajpai.

*Teachings of Swami Vivekananda* : Published by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas. 1948. 240 Pp. Price Rs. 3-0-0.

These teachings of Swami Vivekananda, as collected in the present volume are not mere teachings—dehydrated and atrophied—but rather the full-blooded, soul-inspired outpourings of a dynamic and vibrant personality that at one time swept the two hemispheres with his divine dream of creating a better humanity than the present one. He wrote and spoke

voluminously, encompassing within the gigantic range of his thought and vision, faiths and religions, problems and philosophies, God-knowledge and world-knowledge alike. His was a warrior mood but it concealed an anxious mother's tender solicitude for the well-being of the ailing human child, in this 'transient, unhappy world' as the Gita characterises it. When face to face with human snobbery, the Swami was ruthless. Such are the varied moods reflected in the pieces selected from the vast repertoire of his writings and discourses brought together under the different heads in the volume under review. It is representative and handy, tastefully printed and got up. Its merit lies in leading the reader to the vaster sources of Swamiji's writings. The reader cannot help exclaiming like Romain Rolland, "What transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero."

M. Bajpai.

*A Handbook of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.* By Dr. R. V. DAS  
Hind Kitabs Ltd. Bombay. 238 pp. Price Rs. 5-8-0.

Dr. Ras Vibary Das is a reputed scholar and teacher of philosophy. He has got the real philosopher's insight which is indeed very rare these days. Dr. Das has done great service to students and general readers of philosophy by writing this excellent introduction to the philosophy of Kant. He has ably applied his knowledge of German in expounding certain debatable points in Kant and his analysis has been very illuminating.

Kant is a vast study and the knotty problems in his philosophy are many. Since the very days of Kant, researchers have been explaining him and there is no end to Kantian research. It seems, there are certain baffling problems in Kant such as synthetic unity of apperception, transcendental illusion and the like. The author does not claim to have explained all these abstruse points. But it must be said to his credit that he has satisfactorily explained a good number of them. Paralogisms and antinomies have been lucidly explained.

Many printing mistakes have crept into the book and the errata is not comprehensive.

Benoy Gopal Ray.

*Gita Letters.* By SWAMI AVINASANANDA. Hind Kitabs Ltd, Bombay. 199. pp. Rs. 2-12-0.

There are innumerable commentaries on the Gita, most of which try to conceal rather than reveal the truth contained in it, and as such they are of little help to the students. In these *Letters* Swamiji has attempted to give for the benefit of the young men of modern India an exposition of the immortal celestial song of Lord Krishna, in a language which can be best understood by them. His style is simple, conversational and lucid.

Swami Avinasananda belongs to the Ramakrishna Mission. He has been daily studying the Gita for more than a quarter of a century. "And he is already well known to the literary world", says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his foreward to this book, "for his edition of the three volumes of the *Cultural Heritage of India*". It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that the Swamiji has so eloquently interpreted the teachings of the Gita to the student community of India through his fifty letters addressed to a girl student named Jaya.

For thousands of years the Gita has inspired Indian leaders of thought and action. It has enlightened the path of countless spiritual *Sadhakas* of the world. In modern times men like Lokamanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo have drawn their inspiration and solace from it. There is no wonder if it gives a thrill and glow of light to the intellectuals and spiritualists of the West too. The Gita has, however, a special message for the young men of to day, who are going to hold the reigns of the world of to-morrow. This book of Swami Avinasananda forms a very good introduction for its study by young inquisitive minds.

It will be very much appreciated if the Swami supplements these letters by another volume containing the original text of the Gita along with an English rendering of it from the students' point of view. The author has freely used Sanskrit words and phrases in this book. It may have been somewhat embarrassing to those who do not know this language. Happily for such readers a glossary has been given at the end of the book, in which all the Sanskrit words occurring in the text have been explained.

Jai G.

*Uttara Satyagraha Gita* : An epic poem in Sanskrit by PANDITA KSHAMA RAO. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay.

Pandita Kshama Rao is not a new-comer in the field of modern Sanskrit poetry. She is already well-known as the authoress of *Mīrālaharī* and *Satyagraha Gita*. The present volume is a sequel to the latter work and

deals with the latter part of Gandhiji's life and teachings. Sanskrit language with its lofty philosophical traditions and highly dignified diction is evidently a most suitable vehicle for expressing the great ideals of Satyagraha. We are glad to discover the learned authoress handling this medium with all the skill and delicacy it claims. Dealing with the most stirring events and highly intriguing situations in the history of modern India, the poetess has shown a remarkable command over the epic style, and every chapter of the book reveals her sincerity of purpose. The forty-seven chapters of the book cover not only the sermons of and interviews with Gandhiji but also serve as a faithful mirror of the main social and political events of the country. The entire book is written in a serene and graceful style worthy of Gandhiji's biography.

Hazariprasad Dwivedi.

*Visva-Darsan* : Edited by CHANDRAGUPTA VIDYALANKARA & DEVENDRA SATYARTHI. Published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Delhi.

A monthly in Hindi intended to educate public opinion on international problems, published under the auspices of the Ministry of Information, Government of India. It is gratifying to note that the Government felt it cogent to publish a magazine of this nature. But the common reader cannot, however, conceal a feeling of disappointment at the time and rather second-hand standard of most of the articles published in the magazine. One acutely misses original articles dealing with the political and socio-economic problems of other countries which may help in understanding the currents and crosscurrents of international politics. Contemporary politics is a complex and tangled affair and authentic writings interpreting the trends of movements in India and abroad will be extremely welcome. It is because we expect a deal more from a journal published under such eminent auspices and commanding such substantial resources that we are rather severe in our appraisal of this magazine. We feel sure that the able editors will strive hard to raise its standard so that the public may consider the venture self-justified.

Rampujan Tiwari.

*Gandhiji* : Vol. I ( Homages in Hindi ) : Chief Editor : Kamalapati Tripathi. 1948. Kasi Vidvapitha Publications Dept. ; Benares Cantt. Rs. 1-8-0.

This welcome publication marks the inauguration of an ambitious series launched upon by the Vi'cyapitha to commemorate the long and sweet association that existed between Gandhiji and that renowned Institution from its very inception. The volume under review comprises of the messages and homages posthumously offered by the leaders of the nation to its Father. These have been ably classified and aptly prefaced by a brief sketch of the trend of events following the fateful evening of the 30th January, 1948 and the country's reaction to them. The whole series is to be completed in more than two dozen volumes available at very accessible prices and covering almost all the myriad phases of Bapu's promethean life. We expect much from this venture of the Kasi Vidyapitha and offer our best wishes for its success.

M. Bajpai.

*Amar Asa* : ( Poems in Hindi ) : By Prof. Srimannarayan Agrawal. Kitabistan, Allahabad. 1948. 69 Pp. Rs 3-12-0.

It is intriguing to watch Prof. Agrawal, the well-known exponent of Gandhian Social Polity, enticed by the Muse of Poetry. *Amar Asa* or Deathless Hope, epitomises the poet's struggles against the psychological depression that tried to cast its shadows on his spirit during his incarceration in 1942 and his ultimate triumph over the same. These verses, trivial and trite though they seem to be, have yet a lyrical freshness and delicacy of their own. The little snippets of poetry, at the end are however prosaic and didactic and we miss in them the poetic quality of the lyrics. The printing and format of this book leave nothing to desire.

M. Bajpai.

*Allahabad University Magazine* : Diamond Jubilee Number , 1947.

*Allahabad University Magazine* : Diamond Jubilee Souvenir, 1947.

*Allahabad University Hindi Magazine* : Diamond Jubilee Number, 1947.

These three companion volumes of the ancient organ of the Allahabad University commemorating the celebration of its Diamond Jubilee in Decem-

ber, 1947, will be widely read by all who are interested in the various phases of our educational and cultural life. The magazine in English offers a sumptuous feast to every reader, the menu being long and the material fresh and savoury. The Jubilee Souvenir outlines briefly the history of this great University, the development of its rich traditions of learning and its major achievements. It also contains about one hundred interesting photographs of persons and places associated with the University. The Hindi edition of the Magazine has its own interesting features, among which Sri Sumitranandan Pant's poem *Kāla- Aśva*, Dr. Amarnath Jha's *Sixty years of the University* and Dr. Gorakh Prasad's cogent note on the Reformation of the Nagari Script deserve special mention. The three publications are indeed worthy of the event they are meant to commemorate.

M. Bajpai.

## BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

- A Short History of Existentialism.* By JEAN WOHL. Philosophical Library, Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York 46, N. Y. 58 pp.
- Rabindranath Tagore : Poet and Dramatist.* 2nd edition. By EDWARD THOMPSON. Oxford University Press, 330 pp. Rs. 10-0-0
- Literature and Literary Criticism.* By M. G. BHATE. Karnatak Publishing House, Bombay 4. 152 pp.
- Tears and Laughter.* By KAHLIL GIBRAN. Ed. and with preface by Martin L. Wolf. Philosophical Library, Inc., New York. 127 pp. \$2. 75.
- Charles Freer Andrews.* By BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI and MARJORIE SYKES. Foreword by M. K. Gandhi. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. xiv + 334 pp. 10s. 6d.
- Letters to My Son.* By DAGOBERT D. RUNES. Philosophical Library Inc., New York. 92 pp. \$2. 75.
- Hindu View of Christ* By SWAMI AKHILANANDA. Philosophical Library Inc., New York. 291 pp. \$3-0-0.
- The Background of Assamese Culture.* By R. M. NATH. Pub. by A. K. NATH, Mimosa Ridge, Nongthymai, Shillong, 158 pp. ( Illustrated ) Rs. 7-8-0.
- Divine Dwellers in the Desert.* By GURDIAL MALLIK. Nalanda Publications, P. O. Box No. 1353, Bombay. 80 pp. Rs. 3-12-0
- A History of Maithili Literature.* Vol. I. By JAYAKANTA MISHRA. Tirabhukti Publications, Allahabad. 472 pp. Rs. 15-0-0.
- Sri Aurobindo.* By G. H. LANGLEY. Christopher Johnson. Publishers Ltd., 109 Great Russell Street, London, W. C. 1. 135 pp. 10s. 6d.
- Yoga : The Method of Re-Integration.* By ALAIN DANIELOU. Christopher Johnson Publishers Ltd., London. 165 pp. 16s.
- Introduction to Comparative Mysticism.* By JACQUES DE MARQUETTE. Philosophical Library Inc., New York 229 pp. \$3.75.
- Philosophy of Nature.* By MORITZ SCHLICK. Philosophical Library Inc., New York. 136 pp. \$3.0-0.
- Twilight in India.* By GERVEE BARONTE. Philosophical Library Inc., New York. 382 pp. \$3. 75.
- How to Speak Better English.* By NORMAN LEWIS. Jaico Publishing House, 125 Bell Lane, Bombay. Rs. 6-0-0.



- Treatise on Values.* By SAMUEL L. HART. Philosophical Library Inc., New York. 165 pp. \$3. 75.
- Man and this Mysterious Universe.* By BRYNJOLF BJORSET. Philosophical Library Inc., New York. 174 pp. \$3. 75.
- Droll Stories.* By HONORE DE BALZAC. Jaico Publishing House. Bombay. 439 pp. Rs. 1-8-0.
- Profiles.* By G. VENKATACHALAM. Nalanda Publications, Bombay. 309 pp. Rs. 8-4-0.
- Aesthetics.* Ed. MAHESH GUPTA. Pub. by Youth's Art and Culture Circle, 172, Princess Street, Bombay.
- Guide Book on Dancing.* By N. LAKSHIMANAN. Issued under the authority of Director of Public Instruction, Madras. 48 pp.
- No Ankletbells for Her.* By MANJERI S. ISVARAN. With an Introduction by JOHN HAMPSON. Mitra, Madras. Shakti Karyalayam, Royapettah, Madras 14. 155 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.
- Tirukkural of Tiruvalluvar.* Eng. Translation by V. R. RAMACHANDRA DIKSHITAR. Foreword by A. Ramaswami Mudaliar. The Adyar Library, Madras. 271 pp Rs 3-0-0
- Tirukkural of Tiruvalluvar.* In Roman Transliteration with Eng. Translation by V. R. RAMACHANDRA DIKSHITAR. The Adyar Library, Madras. 271 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.
- And So We March.* BY SHIVA PRASAD CHOWDHURY. Dasgupta & Co. Ltd., 54/3, College Street, Calcutta. 160 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.
- Yatindramatadipika* by SRINIVASADAS. Eng. Translation and Notes by SWAMI ADIDEVANANDA. Foreword by P. N. Srinivasachari. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. 212 pp. Rs. 5-0-0.
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- The Problems of Philosophy.* By SATISHCHANDRA CHATTERJEE. Das Gupta & Co., Ltd., 54/3, College Street, Calcutta 12. 345 pp. Rs. 6-8-0.
- Bharatiya Vidya*, Vol. IX. Shri K. M. Munshi Diamond Jubilee Volume—Pt. I. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chaupatty Road, Bombay. 378 pp. Rs. 15-0-0.
- Pahlavi Vendidad.* Transliteration and Translation by BEHRAMGORE T. ANKLESARIA. Ed. by Dinshah D. Kapadia. K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136, Apollo Street, Fort, Bombay, 404 pp. Rs. 15-0-0.

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- Ramanama.* By M. K. GANDHI. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad 68 pp. Re. 1-0-0.
- Bapu—My Mother.* By MANUBEHN GANDHI. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 56 pp. Re. 0-12-0.
- Satyagraha in Champaran.* By RAJENDRA PRASAD. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 224 pp. Rs. 2-4-0.
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- Food Shortage and Agriculture.* By M. K. GANDHI, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 227 pp. Rs. 2-8-0.
- To the Students.* By M. K. GANDHI. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 324 pp. Rs. 3-8-0.
- Gandhiana.* Compiled by P. G. DESHPANDE. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 239 pp. Rs. 3-4-0.
- Communal Unity.* By M. K. Gandhi. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 1006 pp. Rs. 9-0-0.
- Rabindranath, Pt. I.* ( In Bengali ). By ASHOK SEN. Sri Harendra Krishna Sircar, 9 Madhav Chatterjee Lane, Elgin Road, Calcutta 20. 138 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.
- Rabindranather Sahityadarsha* ( in Bengali ). By PRABASJIVAN CHOWDHURY. Samskriti Vaithak, 17 Panditiya Place, Calcutta. 82 pp. Rs. 1-8-0.

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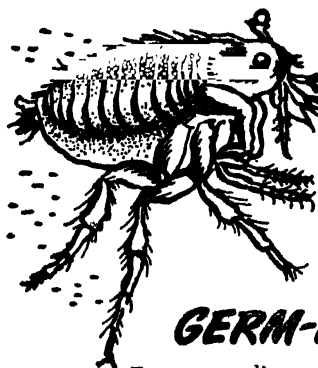
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## SONG OF TRUTH

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

To Truth, this day, we'll dedicate our mind,  
All hail ! O Truth, to thee.  
Truth we will understand,  
Truth we will worship, and  
The treasure that is Truth we'll strive to find,  
All hail ! O Truth, to thee.

Should sorrow sear our soul  
No false thoughts shall we think,  
Should fortune frown on us,  
No false deeds shall we do,  
Should punishment befall,  
No false words shall we speak,  
All hail ! O Truth, to thee.

To good works we will dedicate our hearts,  
Goodness supreme ! all hail !  
Good we shall gain,  
With good shall be adorned,  
Of good things we shall sing,  
Goodness supreme ! all hail !

Should sorrow sear our soul,  
No evil shall we think,  
Should fortune frown on us,  
No evil shall we do,



Should punishment befall,  
No evil shall we speak,  
Goodness supreme ! all hail !

In blissful joy we'll merge ourselves this day,  
O blissful One ! all hail !  
In all we see, throughout the universe,  
An inner joy shall dwell.  
Joy in our hearts,  
In each and every action,  
Joy at all times,  
In grief and tribulation,  
Joy in all worlds,  
In death and desperation,  
O Joy supreme ! all hail !

## MEN I HAVE SEEN

ANNADA SANKAR RAY

HAS actually seeing famous people any value? Of all who gape at the Taj Mahal how many behold it as it really is? The same is true of Rabindranath and Gandhiji.

Yet one wants to see them, to hear them, to speak to, to become acquainted with and make oneself known to them and to write it all down afterwards. In doing so it is possible to be unjust to these great men. This apprehension has made me hesitate so long. But the evidence of one witness will be lost entirely if I never record it.

So in this essay I shall bear witness, saying that I have seen with my own eyes Rabindranath, Romain Rolland, Bertrand Russell, Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells and Mahatma Gandhi, that I have talked with some of them and taken tea with one. But I shall not be able to say on oath whether what Rolland gave me was tea or coffee. The disadvantage of not being a Suniti Kumar Chatterjee is that such details escape my notice.

When I first went to Santiniketan to see Rabindranath I went alone as an unknown student. That was, I think, in the spring of 1924. The poet's room was not guarded then and it was also in an open place. I walked straight in. The poet was writing. When he became aware of my presence I said, "I wish to ask you something. Will you have time for me?" "What is it?" he asked. The question was of course a ruse; conversation was my object. I was about to speak when several relatives of the poet came in, possibly Gaganendranath and Abanindranath. "Come tomorrow," the poet bade me. The next day he was sitting quietly looking through an English magazine. Whether he saw me or not I do not know but he

came out on to the verandah humming a melody. I was wondering how to begin when his daughter put in an appearance. To me going alone to see Rabindranath was the greatest adventure of my life at the time. But I was too shy to face a woman and left without a word. What would my friends say if I went back to Patna defeated? I incurred the expense of staying one more night at the guest house. Very early the next morning the poet was strolling up and down the road. I followed him. Just then Mr. Andrews came up. I was on the point of giving in but Mr. Andrews was a compassionate man. And then, how long could he pace slowly up and down with the poet? He strode briskly away. Without wasting any more time I blurted out my question: "Ah-h is art too good to be human nature's daily food?" All the way from Patna I had memorised that. Otherwise it would certainly have stuck in my throat.

"Good," the poet replied, "I'll answer you in my lecture at the University." We exchanged a few more words. I recall he said that Higher Mathematics cannot be simplified in order to make it easy and accessible to everyone. He who wants to understand it must first prepare himself by a study of lower Mathematics. At the time it displeased me to have art compared with Higher Mathematics; I could have argued about it with him. But I let the matter drop. Now I could go back able to say I had made the acquaintance of the poet. I had at least seen him with my own eyes.

I did not attend his lecture at the Calcutta University. From the papers I learned he had kept his word; he answered 'a question put to him by a visiting student'. Since then I have met him many times but the adventure of the first has never been repeated. The first sight of him overwhelmed me. His poetry was not only on paper; he lived it. Poetry was in his appearance, his glance, his posture, his voice, his words; no part of his person was devoid of it. He was the poet in everything. Life and poetry had met in him, mingling like the

waters of the Ganges and the Jumna ; his poetry was his life, his life his poetry. Are we others who write poetry poets all the time ? In everything ? This was the question which I brought back with me.

A year or so later I slung a camera around my neck—a borrowed camera for I did not know how to take photographs—and, posing as a journalist, walked into a meeting of the All India Congress Committee. There was no other way to get in. That sitting, at Patna, was of grave import. On one side of the hall sat Gandhiji like a statue of the Buddha. There was a small desk in front of him. The day must have been hot for the leaders got up constantly to go outside for a chat but Gandhiji was immovable. What extraordinary endurance, concentration, sense of duty ! Hour after hour he sat on in the same position, listening, speaking, writing. Sir Ali Imam and other famous people came and went, all revolving about one person, sometimes close to him, sometimes at a distance, but always attentive. Other leaders could move about and were given respite now and then but the great leader of all had none.

Years after I went to see Gandhiji at Malikanda. This time the desk was between us. We were face to face. I had only a few words to say about a personal matter. He listened quietly, merely nodding his head. He was a reserved man, not drawn out easily. He was distressed on learning of my sorrow. "Are these things in the power of man ?" he said and his eyes were misty, his voice moist. In another connection he smiled. When he smiled his whole aspect changed, his eyes began suddenly to shine and his laughter was as direct as a child's. But it did not happen often. For the most part he was silent and grave.

His body from the waist up was bare but his bareness did not repel. In him it seemed perfectly natural. Gandhiji alone of all the Congress leaders adopted this undress. He had not always worn it. European habits were left behind him in South

Africa and towards the end of 1921 at Madura he abandoned his Gujarati ones. He had asked his countrymen to make and wear khaddar and he cherished the hope that they would. When the end of the prescribed year drew near and he saw that the response to his request was still slight he announced that "as a sign of mourning he would discard for a month his dhoti, vest and cap and content himself with a mere loin cloth and, when needed, an additional piece of cloth to be thrown over the upper part of the body." How many months have expired since! He bore the impress of sorrow upon him to the end. Even in the cold of an English winter he refused to change his attire.

When one saw Gandhiji it did not take long to realise that his strength was carefully husbanded. He had built up a reserve of inner power just as others build up stocks of money, of food, or of armaments. All his life he trained his body, fitting it to the bow of life as an arrow is fitted, making it target-worthy, ready to fly to the mark. He had either to hit the bull's eye or shatter himself in the attempt. For him there was no alternative. It is mistaken to call him an ascetic; he was a warrior, asceticism was merely an ingredient of his training in the use of his arms.

My interview with Romain Rolland has been recorded elsewhere. For those who have not read my *Pathe Prabase* I give here the following extract :

"It was painful to me to have to destroy the picture of the creator of Jean Christophe to which his work and photographs had given shape in my mind. But there was no difficulty in loving the man as he was. If he had had physical strength equal to his strength of spirit my admiration for him would have been greater but to find the external garment of such a splendid mind like the baby Bholanath's stirred my sympathy. Only in Rabindranath have I seen a personality harmoniously housed both physically and mentally. I was disappointed on seeing Gandhiji and also on seeing Rolland. The fierce

burning of their spirits has reduced their flesh to a layer of ashes that only coats the fire ; it is like the coating of ash-paste with which the tantric sadhu cloaks his inner *tapasya*. A deep compassion was awakened in me for Rolland as for Gandhi, such as is not awakened by the merely good."

My interview with Rolland took place in Switzerland towards the beginning of 1928 or the end of 1927. Let me give another extract : "Up to then he had been speaking to me as to a relative, intimately, with a soft, sweet smile. At the mention of the coming war he became as excited as King Lear. Emotion glowed in his staring eyes like a flame flaring up before it goes out. His right hand rose and fell with the rhythm of his passionate speech. So absorbed was he in his subject as he leaned forward in his chair I was afraid he would fall out of it. The wound left in his heart by the first World War has never healed and at a touch he is convulsed with pain."

Such was Rolland and yet he ceased to be a pacifist. In the second World War he advocated the taking of the sword against injustice. Bertrand Russell did likewise. Why the pacifism of these two men should weather one world war only to break down before the next is irrelevant here.

I saw Russell in the autumn of 1928 at a London meeting. What the lecture was about I do not remember nor do I remember a single word he said. Russell's lectures are as dry as his writing is interesting. In print perhaps it would have been interesting enough but I did not enjoy as much as I heard that day. He was as stiff as a stick the whole time, the notes for his lecture were stuck up a few paces in front of him, and now and then he took a step forward or back. He neither smiled himself nor made others smile. When he writes perhaps he is able to forget that he is an aristocrat but when he mounts a platform all his aristocratic inhibitions unwittingly make him wooden. His voice is deep, his face without expression. He is a tall, well-formed, handsome figure. His hair is grey but there are no other signs of age.

Some days later Bernard Shaw lectured in the same hall. Shaw also had notes but he never even glanced at them ; his eyes were on his audience. What a remarkable voice and pronunciation he has ! His voice is as melodious as though it had been trained for singing and his words so distinct that if any one heard wrongly it was the fault of his own ears. I don't remember what the lecture was about but it was delivered under the auspices of the Fabian society and had something to do with socialism. There were amusing things in it. A characteristic of Shaw is that he can say thought-provoking things in a way that is funny. And he is always lively. He was joking as long as he was on the platform. Now and then he would draw a naughty laugh. Making a pass at the scientists he pronounced laboratory as lavatory. A man so vivacious and full of life is rare at his age.

When Shaw came down and, after waiting a few minutes, walked past me on his way out I noticed he was dressed very ordinarily. It is doubtful whether his tie matched his coat. He has earned a lot of money writing books and is the wealthiest writer in the world. But on himself he spends very little, living in a flat as he did then. His manners are equally simple. On the platform he gives them a touch of the theatre but when he comes down he is at once one of us. He is also tall but thin. And he was as straight as a palm even at the age he was then, just like a palm-leaf soldier doll.

I did not see Wells abroad. Two and a half years ago we met in Bombay. He was on his way to Australia and had disembarked to see the city during the short time his ship was there. Madame Sophia Wadia invited some of us to meet him at her house. The time was brief and I would perhaps have had no hope of pushing through the crowd of women and approaching him if one of them, shyer than the rest, had not requested me to get an autograph for her. Holding up the autograph-album like a flag I made my way through to him. We had scarcely exchanged two words about what he had said

at the Conference of Scientists in England as to how scientists could help in remedying the world's ills when I looked up to see Lilavati Munshi standing before us. It was impossible to sit on, the more so as she was the famous wife of an Honourable Minister who had already accorded me the honour of an invitation to tea. I didn't get the autograph.

Wells was short, round, firmly knit, neat. His dress was simple but not untidy like Shaw's. He was very softly spoken, spoke slowly and was not showy in his speech. He was very good looking. He may not have been handsome but there was a sort of indomitableness in his face, an indomitableness that is one of the chief assets of the English race. They take things easily ; a thousand difficulties do not nonpluss them. They are unmoved by blows and immovable. He and his countrymen are well-known for their reliability. Wells is unaffected and modest. As long as he was there he mixed easily with everybody and did not let us feel how much greater he was than we were.



## C. F. ANDREWS : SAINT AND REVOLUTIONARY

By S. K. GEORGE

A GREAT MODERN ENGLISH WRITER<sup>1</sup> has said that the ideal man is a sceptical saint, and in these days he would be a revolutionary too. But the elements that go to make up this ideal combination are found mixed in varying proportions in the really great *and* good men who have compelled the admiration and won the allegiance of right-thinking people in the modern world. Among these there have been few who have called forth greater love and devotion than Dinabandhu C. F. Andrews. The sceptic in him was rather quiescent, but his saintliness was unquestioned and his revolutionary zeal took him to all quarters of the globe, as a knight-errant of righteousness, wherever unrighteousness was rampant and the oppressed poor cried out for redress. A Faithful Apostle of Christ, his was in full measure the blessing the Master had pronounced on those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, against whom all manner of evil are falsely spoken ; for often despised and rejected by his own people and at times suspected by those whom he sought to serve, he has come to be recognised by both East and West alike as one of the greatest Reconcilers the world has seen, a great Bridge-builder between civilisations. The full-length biography of him that is now published,<sup>2</sup> as the joint work of an Indian co-worker and an English Friend, is a fitting tribute to his memory and will greatly help in setting forward his great mission of reconciling man to man and man everywhere to his Maker.

1 Olaf Stapledon : *Saints and Revolutionaries*.

2 *Charles Freer Andrews : A Narrative* by Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes, With a Foreword by M. K. Gandhi, George Allen & Unwin. Price : Cloth 18s ; Paper 10s. 6d.

Marjorie Sykes, who was the first Rector of the *Dinabandhu Bhavana*, organised in Santiniketan as a memorial to this great Friend of India, of Visva-Bharati and of Gurudev Tagore, undertook the writing of this biography as her first assignment in that capacity. A fitting acknowledgement is made to the Governing Body of Santiniketan for "the leisure thus afforded, the excellent opportunities for library work which Santiniketan offers, and easy access to the files of Andrews' correspondence preserved there." She was also provided with facilities for travels abroad to make personal investigations of scenes connected with Andrews's activities. These could not be fully carried out, as many parts of the world were inaccessible during the war-years when the book was mainly in preparation. But within this limitation she carried out her investigations most thoroughly and carefully and has drawn upon every available source material. In Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi she had a very helpful collaborator, who was Andrews's co-worker in the cause of Indians abroad and had himself brought out a biography of Andrews in Hindi, based on personal reminiscences that he had persuaded Andrews to dictate to him. "Tell your father I want you," Andrews had told him soon after they had met, and thus appropriated his services. The result of this happy collaboration between an English woman and an Indian colleague has been a book of rare charm, in which every facet of a most memorable personality is vividly depicted and through the pages of which the man Andrews, "the best-loved Englishman in India", draws almost imperceptibly nearer and nearer to the reader. A set of delightful photographic plates add considerably to this impression of his living spirit breathing through this loving narrative of a deathless life, "a life which," in the words of the Poet whom he loved deeply and served devotedly, "is transcendent over death itself and dwells with us imperishably".<sup>3</sup>

Those who came to know Andrews in India, wholly absorbed in fighting her battles, utterly devoted to his students

3 Rabindranath Tagore in his Foreword to C. F. A.'s *The Sermon on the Mount*,

and the innumerable lost and lowly ones who turned to him for consolation and help, or only as the Wandering Christian, fighting the demon of racialism wherever it raised its ugly head in any corner of the world, got the impression that he was a person without close home ties. This wrong impression is wholly corrected by the first section of the book which is aptly called "The Englishman." It would have been strange indeed if this man, overflowing with love towards all mankind, was lacking in love and tenderness to his home and people. In fact it was because he was a true-born Englishman and loved home and country best that he could love India and the whole world. Actually wherever he was, as long as she lived, his mother's weekly letter was never missed. The mother in him was very strong. "My life seems only able to blossom into flower when I can pour out my affections upon others as my mother did upon me," he wrote once to Gurudev. In spite of the estrangement that developed between him and his father at one stage, owing to theological differences, the affection between them never flagged and his father had fixed for him for all time "the ideal of a Christian gentleman." And there were innumerable other ties which bound him to his beloved England. True, he loved the Palms of Santiniketan,<sup>4</sup> but England perhaps was dearer to him. "What a comfort it will be to be back in dear England again. In a very true sense I want to lay my head upon the lap of English earth once more," he wrote to an English friend.

But this true-born Englishman was veritably one of the "twice-born". He was always fond of observing commemoration days; and he regarded March the 20th, 1904, the day of his landing in India, as his 'Indian Birthday'. Few 'once-born' Indians have loved their homeland with a deeper devotion or suffered loneliness, misrepresentation and contumely for her sake more than this 'foreigner'. And perhaps no other 'foreigner' has ever been taken so warmly to the heart of India as 'Andrews

4 A poem : *The Palms of Santiniketan* 1914 is printed in the Appendices.

Sahib'. When the news of his mother's death reached him in South Africa, in 1914, in the midst of delicate negotiations on behalf of Indian settlers there, he found consolation in the love and sympathy of the Indian ladies who came to him led by Mrs. Gandhi and comforted him saying : "We will be your mothers now". His own mother's love it was, he wrote to Gurudev, that "has made me love India with such an intense love....It has made India my home in a peculiar way ; and her death will make me find her in Indian homes. Her spirit will shine out at me through Indian eyes and Indian mothers' faces".

There can be few instances in the annals of human friendship more beautiful and ennobling than the bonds that grappled Andrews with hoops of steel, nay chains of gold, to the two noblest and best Indians of this age. The story of the growth and fulfilment of his attachment to Gurudev is movingly told in the narrative. Gurudev in his *Letters to a Friend* has borne testimony to the warmth and worth of that friendship. In his Foreword to Andrews' posthumous publication, *The Sermon on the Mount*, the Poet was almost ecstatic in his thankfulness to the Divine "by whose grace this soul was sent to me. .... Coming unsought, it was a gift of God beyond all price". But if Andrews' love for Gurudev was the devotion of a *chela* to his *guru*, the bond that linked him to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was love between equals and co-workers. There was in it the give and take of controversy, the play of wholesome and whole-hearted merriment, as in the instances of Gandhiji poking fun at Charlie's fine beard, gentle remonstrance and timely correction, and above all a tenderness of affection that soothed each other in moments of supreme crises in the lives of these crusaders of truth and non-violence.

My dearest Charlie,

Though you do not want me to write to you I cannot help ( it ) .

What can be the cause of Gurudev wanting you ? God who has kept you from harm so long will keep you as long as He needs your service. But you sometimes will not help Him even when you can

and must. And for you to have nervousness about anything or anybody is bad. When I see you anxious about anything I ask myself what is the meaning of "Be careful for nothing".

Your Jamshedpur report is wonderful. Only you could have written it. No beating about the bush.

I am all with you in keeping up the *langoti* for the Bhil children.

With deepest love,

Yours, Mohan.

Never again eating rich foods even to please the host. I should like that definite promise.

This was sometime in 1925. On another occasion the editor of *Young India* found his contributor's writing not up to the mark and straight came the reprimand :

I have read your article on Burma. The thing is shocking. You have seen too much to enable you to analyse properly and trace causes. Moreover you have not had enough time to study each problem. Will you not rest and be thankful for a while? Work is prayer but it can also be madness . . . I am printing it nevertheless because it comes from the utmost purity of your heart.

With love deeper than even you can fathom,

Yours, Mohan.

At their last meeting in the Calcutta hospital, the dying Englishman assured his friend : "Swaraj is coming, Mohan". And when facing his last operation he was greatly cheered by a brief telegram of love and blessing from Gandhiji. "Andrews read it, and sat on for a while in silence. 'I have no anxiety now', he said at last." It is impossible fully to assess the extent of his contribution to the final settlement of the conflict between India and Britain, through his tireless work of interpreting the two peoples to each other, playing the shuttlecock between individuals as well as between countries, especially in interpreting *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*<sup>5</sup> and personality to people who mattered in British politics. He never tired of reiterating what was to him the crucial issue in the Indian situation, a right understanding of Gandhi as the spokesman of India.

5 This is the title of one of Andrews' best books.

"I can only tell you that after nearly twenty years' experience I have never known a more essentially truthful man. If you are to deal with him at all it will be necessary for you to share that belief with me. On no other basis except this confidence in Mr. Gandhi's honesty and sincerity, can the situation in India come to a right settlement."

He did not live to see that happy settlement, but he prepared the way for it as few other individuals had done and India ought ever to hold in grateful remembrance this British champion of Indian independence. who was perhaps the first to voice the demand : *Independence : The Immediate Need*.<sup>6</sup>

One whole section of the book is rightly devoted to commemorate Andrews as the 'Friend of the Poor'. Compassion on the multitude moved him throughout his life, from his undergraduate days, when he spent himself for the poor in the Pembroke College Mission in Walworth, through his constant journeyings to all parts of the world on behalf of Indian indentured labourers, down to the days when worn out and wearied he sought to pass on his concern for the lowliest and the lost to younger hands. "I am nearly seventy years of age, and even the stamp expenses have become too much for me; yet the extraordinary benefit that has often come owing to my being able to get them private assistance makes me unwilling to give it up until I can see some way of its being carried out more effectively", he wrote to one of the younger officers of the government of India. It was characteristic of the man that one of the visions of the Lord whom he served should take on the features of a poor frightened indentured labourer he had seen in Natal. In a poem written on that experience in 1915 he says :

There he crouched,  
Back and arms scarred, like a hunted thing,  
Terror-stricken.

All within me surged towards him,  
While the tears rushed.  
Then a change.  
Through his eyes I saw Thy glorious face—  
Ah, the wonder !  
Calm, unveiled in deathless beauty,  
Lord of sorrow.

But his was no sentimental love, issuing in individual acts of charity, though there were many instances of spontaneous and uncalculating acts of Franciscan sharing of his all with deserving and even undeserving destitutes . . . “Better be deceived by the unworthy than run the risk of refusing the needy”, was his motto. But with the heart of a woman he combined the wisdom of the serpent. The campaigns he waged against rampant evils, whether it was the traffic in opium, or indentured labour in the Fiji Islands, or economic injustices in India, were all masterpieces of strategy. With infinite patience and intelligent industry he mastered the facts of any situation he handled and marshalled them with uncanny skill and shrewdness. And the solutions he offered were often far-reaching and showed almost inspired insight into the basic realities of tangled situations. This unique combination in him of strength and sweetness has not been better described than in a letter to the authors by C. Kingsley Williams, giving his impressions of a visit by Andrews to Achimota College in W. Africa :

“Holiness some of them had seen before ; intelligence all of them ( I hope ) had met ; energy and endurance they were not unfamiliar with ; but holiness combined with intelligence and ripe experience of men and matters, with great pioneering adventures in practical ( and often successful ) quixotry, and with a more than feminine tenderness and gentleness and courtesy. . . that was something they ( and everybody else too—the man *was* unique ) had never seen before and suspected that if they missed they would miss for ever.”

Nor are the readers left in doubt as to the secret of that strength and sweetness. Though not specially dealt with in any

single chapter or section—the sections follow the chronological order of events—the theme of the growth, the struggles and the fulfilment of the inner life of this man of God runs like a golden thread all through the narrative. Cradled in a fervidly Christian home and grown up in highly orthodox surroundings, Andrews went through almost a mental revolution when he found Christ betrayed by the churches, but veritably present in a Tagore and a Gandhi. Christian doctrines like those of the Virgin Birth of Christ and the Resurrection of the Body had presented intellectual difficulties to him even as an ordinand. But it was the moral difficulties presented by the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian creed that caused him the greatest heart-searching and brought him to the brink of a breach with his old moorings. Strangely enough, it was the understanding and sympathy of his two great non-Christian friends, Gurudev and Gandhiji, that steadied him and helped him to find fulfilment in the faith of his fathers. During the days of his utmost restlessness Gurudev urged him to return to his God and to cling fast to the priceless heritage of his Christian devotional life. And Gandhiji wrote tenderly to Andrews' father :

"You are likely to be grieved over his having given up the clerical robe. I hope however that such is not the case. His action is no change ; it is, I feel convinced, expansion. He preaches through his life as very few do, and he preaches the purest love—Charlie has evidently a mission of whose extent even those who are nearest him have no conception. May I plead for your blessings to Charlie in all his work ? It will be such a comfort to him to know that nothing he has done has grieved you."

Upheld by such sympathy it is no wonder that Andrews' understanding of Christianity and of its relations to other faiths deepened and widened. "To be a Christian," he wrote about this time, "means not the expression of an outward creed but the living of an inward life." And the true spirit of religion, his own experiences taught him, was not to be found in hostile isolation, but in a "zeal that makes for harmony and peace."



His early training and associations had fixed for all time the tone and mode of his own apprehension of the Divine. "Religion for him was not a system of speculative ideas ; it was the experience of a transforming Friendship". Andrews was a born *bhakta* and Christ was the object of his *bhakti*.

"Christ has become for me in my moral and spiritual experience the living, tangible expression of God. With regard to the infinitude of God that lies beyond this I am able at this present stage of existence to know nothing that can be defined. But the human in Christ, that is also divine, I can really know ; and when I see this divine beauty, truth and love in others also, it is natural for me to relate it to Christ."

This explains the secret alike of that wonderful transformation of a human life, making it conform more and more to the image of his Master, till those who saw Andrews were constantly reminded of Christ himself, and of the warmth and quickness of his appreciation of the Divine in all its manifestations. And India understood him and adored the Christ in him. It was a non-Christian Indian co-worker, one of the authors themselves, who made to Andrews the request that he should write a life of Christ, a task which Andrews devoutly set himself to, during the closing years of his life, but could not accomplish because of innumerable other preoccupations. But, as the biography under review aptly and dramatically ends in saying, "*The Life of Christ* had never been written ; it had been, most faithfully, lived."

An exceedingly well-written and well-documented book, this biography of a great soul will go far in perpetuating the memory of a personality that shone with the radiance of righteousness. Yet to catch the full glow of that radiance the reader must go to the intimate self-revelations themselves of this Lover of God and Man. It cannot and is never intended to be a substitute for Andrews' own writings, like *What I Owe to Christ* and *Christ in the Silence*. If there is one criticism I would make of this publication it is its excessive cost, especially for Indian readers. Surely it ought to be possible for Messrs G. Allen &

Unwin, Andrews's own publishers, to produce a cheaper edition that would be within the means of thousands of devoted admirers of this Friend of the Poor in India. The vastly increased sales of such a cheap edition, costing not more than Rupees five a copy, ought to make it a business proposition. And this is a book which in an abridged form, if abridgement is possible in a production so compact, ought to be translated early into all the leading Indian languages. May the name of Charles Freer Andrews be cherished for ever in India and in all the world !

## RABINDRANATH AND BENGALI LITERATURE\*

By SUNILCHANDRA SARKAR

IT IS EASY ENOUGH to write a casual article on Rabindranath. But nothing can be more difficult than to present a consistent account of even a single aspect of his many-sided achievement. Poetry, drama, fiction or prose writings—which ever of these be chosen by the literary critic, he will be confronted not only with a formidable bulk of writings which he must study thoroughly, but also with an amazing variety of purpose and pattern within the same genre. Rabindranath is not difficult in the sense in which some of the modern writers like James Joyce or T. S. Eliot are difficult. Different classes of his writings directly appeal to the minds of different types of persons. But it is most difficult to arrange and classify these impressions and build a framework to hold them all. The critic of Rabindranath must bring to his work the utmost catholicity of interests and breadth of outlook ; and even if he does he is likely to discover many unfamiliar tracts and unplumbed depths in his work. He must be as sharp and nimble-witted as possible ; and yet he will find Rabindranath constantly eluding his grasp and making for unknown distances sooner than he can overtake him.

Such being the case it is not at all surprising that significant criticism of Rabindranath till now has been so meagre. Edward Thompson's *Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist*, seems so far to be the most outstanding, the most ambitious and

\* Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist, 2nd Edition ; By Edward Thompson. Oxford University Press, Pp. 380. Price Rs. 10/-.

Bengali Literature By J. C. Ghosh. Oxford University Press, Pp. 198. Price 15 s.

conscientious work in this field. Within the limits he has prescribed for himself he has missed nothing of moment that scholastic labours could obtain, and has done everything in his power to remove hindrances between himself and a clear view of his subject. His mind, nourished by what is best in Western literature, is strong enough to explore new regions of thought and experience. Though not altogether free from the influence of Western conventions of literary art, it can react more or less as a free agent to new principles of creative activity and unfamiliar standards of excellence. Edward Thompson has indeed most of the qualities that a good literary critic should possess. He is not too proud to consider evidence other than his own. In fact a vast number of his appraisals derive their strength from corroborative statements either by the Poet himself or by some one of his Bengali admirers, chiefly Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis. While giving due importance to these opinions, he has yet been solely guided by his own inner light; when this light has failed to illuminate, he has frankly expressed his doubts and there are certain cases where, unable to accept notions widely held among the Bengali admirers of Rabindranath, he has expressed his views only after a generous admission of his own limitations.

Criticism can only rationalise what intuition has already obtained. In this respect, all genuine appreciation is more an act of faith than a logical conclusion. Edward Thompson has two such convictions which underlie all his judgements and determine the tone of the book. Firstly, he believes in the greatness of Rabindranath as a man. Secondly, he believes in his greatness both as Poet and Dramatist. He believes more in the former than in the latter. 'The West felt that it could not judge of his work—the poems in translation, at any rate, did not seem to amount to a tremendous deal—but it could feel the greatness of his mind and soul'. This is Thompson's analysis of the Western attitude to Rabindranath, and he himself must have been sustained by a similar faith during his life-long enquiry into Rabindranath's

literary achievement. The book under review contains the fruits of his long labours and shows through what doubts and difficulties a very sincere critical mind arrives at its final estimate of the Poet's greatness. The vast improvement in outlook and understanding that the present edition shows makes it an altogether different book from the first edition. But even here Thompson does not make any dogmatic assertion. He is most cautious and moderate in his claim. He affirms that Rabindranath's place is *not below* the rank of such literary figures as Victor Hugo, Wordsworth etc. And he is content to *suggest* that it may be even higher, that Rabindranath's place may ultimately be with the few greatest writers of all times. He thinks that Rabindranath's countrymen are right in claiming that he is the greatest lyric poet of the world. He himself establishes on ground of his own inner testimony the dramatic greatness of Rabindranath, who according to him is with the greatest in this respect also, if not of them. The only point about which he is diffident is whether the Poet can be classed with a Shakespeare or a Dante.

The limitations of the book are obvious. The author has set himself a number of tasks which it is impossible to carry out within a single book like this. He has attempted to give in the opening chapter an account of earlier Bengali literature as a background of Rabindranath's work. He has traced the life-story of Rabindranath from beginning to end devoting a proportionately large amount of space to it. Several whole chapters towards the end of the book are purely biographical. He has to divide the remaining space between the consideration of Rabindranath's poetry and that of his dramatic writings, and interspersed even among these are passing notices or short accounts of his prose writings. This has necessarily precluded a full exposition of the two major aspects chosen. *Bālākā* and *Palātākā* among poetical writings and *Phālguni* among the dramas are the last books to receive critical consideration. The numerous publications which came later have either been merely

mentioned or omitted altogether. Thus books like *Purabi*, *Syāmali*, *Bithikā* and among the later dramas, *Natir Puja* and *Red Oleanders* are not even mentioned. He dismisses all of Rabindranath's work after his sixtieth year with a quotation from an essay by Buddhadeva Bose in the *Golden book of Tagore* who says that if Tagore had written nothing else he would still be at the head of Bengal letters. One cannot but sympathise with this ardent admirer and student of Rabindranath. It was after a prolonged, heroic struggle with a foreign language and a restless genius who broke new ground till the last day of his life, that Thompson chose to part company with the Poet at what seemed to him to be a point of culmination in the poet's career. Even in Bengal, there are very few who have gone the whole length with Rabindranath; most indeed, knowing themselves unable to overtake this eternal wayfarer, have stopped midway at self-chosen places of rest.

Nor do all the works that fall under the period chosen receive adequate notice. Thompson's own preferences which no doubt he shares with his western readers, come strongly into play in the matter of emphasis and allocation of space. He gives rather an elaborate treatment to poems which are social, political, descriptive, narrative or merely fanciful. In this he does indeed a service by bringing to the Western readers aspects of Rabindranath unfamiliar to them and thus helping to correct their one-sided view of Rabindranath's genius. Thompson's treatment of these poems is as a rule perfectly competent and convincing and some of the verse-translations of these poems done by him deserve to be preserved; but still it must be said that these poems usurp too much space which could have been better utilised. And one or two of these poems in the original are unimportant even in their own class. One suspects that in these cases Thompson was impressed by the idea expressed rather than by its value as expression, its poetic worth. *Creation, Conservation and Destruction* is one such poem. *The Poet's Fancy*, which Thompson translates is such another.

It only proves how difficult it is to be a sure judge of a poetry written in a language not one's own, even for one who has tried hard to master the language. Much of Thompson's unresponsiveness to certain classes of Rabindranath's poems may indeed be due to this failure on his part to see where language oversteps the limits of its meaning and becomes sheer beauty or feeling or power.

In his appraisal of Rabindranath's poetry Thompson finds few occasions to differ from the best critical opinion in Bengal. In many cases he does no more than simply quote from or summarise current Bengali criticism. The poems that he chooses to illustrate the highest flights of Rabindranath's poetical genius would at once show the unanimity. They are, for instance, *Urvashi*, *Farewell to Heaven*, *Ahalya*, *Varshasesh*, *Vaisakh*, *Balaka*, *Shajahan*, *Chanchala* etc. Most of these poems have been translated by Thompson himself for the benefit of western readers, even though English translations of most of them had already been included in Rabindranath's English publications. It was certainly a very daring experiment and it must be admitted that in some cases at least Thompson had a great measure of success. Had he done more of this work, choosing the pieces that really touched the depths of his heart, it would have surely helped the study of Tagore in the West. The English language has enriched itself with practically all that is best in world literature. We have no doubt that sooner or later the demand will come to include in it what is best in Tagore literature. And we feel this work can be best done by young and enterprising Englishmen willing to follow the lead of Edward Thompson.

But Thompson does not identify himself wholly with Bengali attitude to Rabindranath's poetry. In his approvals, he is at one with Bengali critics except in a few cases of personal choice. He does well indeed to draw attention to the detailed observation so unusual in Bengali poetry in the poem *Noon* or to the grandeur and force of the poems bearing on land and sea-storm. His enthusiasm for the narrative poems in *Kathā*, *Kābini*

and *Palātakā* has that ring of personal conviction and enjoyment which one is apt to look for in the best criticism. But where he disapproves, he stands alone. Although he talks about the gracefulness, beauty and technical excellence of *The Golden Boat* poems, his heart does not respond to many of them. He discovers in them a 'miasma of zenana imagery'; and an obsession with such images as 'mother' or 'nuptial chamber'. He also finds a certain thinness of quality in *Katpanā*, *Kbeyā* and *Kshanikā*, though he praises some of the poems included in these books. He believes that the preponderance of ornaments weakens much of the poetry in *Chitrā*, in which the Poet 'embroidered the margins of truth treating it as a missal to be illuminated.' *Lipikā* provides him with instances of 'sledge-hammer emphasis on the trivial'. He does not know what to say about the Jivan-devata phase.

As Thompson's judgment of mystic poetry is based, on his own admission, on personal taste and preference, we need not take it seriously. But what demands serious notice is the analysis he gives of the defects in Tagore's poetry considered as a whole. He finds in this poetry a certain monotony which, according to him, results from the frequent repetition of identical themes, images and sentiments. 'Rabindranath rarely rested content with a thing well-done once . . . he explores and exploits the same emotion far too much'. This monotony is not one of fashion, as in England, but one of tradition, he says. Secondly, he finds this poetry unequal, in spite of its unfailing technical excellence. It is an inequality in thought and matter due, he thinks, to a certain mental laziness and want of grip.

About the first objection we can say that we know of no other poet in world literature who has a greater and finer variety of thought, feeling and form to his credit. And Thompson is not unaware of this. His real objection is to the frequency of certain symbols and images. This repetition is a fact. In the best poems, these images and symbols appear in their full glory; they seem to be born out of the stress of poetic emotion,



unique and all-important because they fulfil an inner need which nothing else could. In the vast majority of kindred poems, they still retain their potency, though they play a comparatively minor role. They do not serve as focal points as in the former class, but simply as side-lights. There are again poems in which they function like ordinary words, units of expression that make up the whole. No extra value attaches to them as in the first two cases, but they form a groundwork of meaning and sentiment, at once concise and effective, upon which the poet can easily shape and build his poetical motif. Among these last-named poems there may be some that are below Rabindranath's average level of attainment, but they are proportionately few in number. A poet is to be condemned when his use of words or symbols becomes simply a matter of conceit or convention, contributing nothing to the poem. We are quite sure that Rabindranath, very seldom, if at all, wrote such poetry.

The second defect, that of inequality, if proved, would include and be mostly a result of the first. Thompson admits that Tagore never falls below a certain standard. But that is partly because technical excellence is rather easy of attainment, Thompson thinks, in the Bengali language which is much more pliable than English. But if verse-writing in Bengali is an easy thing today, we should remember that it is the result of the life-long efforts of a man of giant strength and infinite inventiveness to shape and mould a medium which he found crude and beset with many imperfections. Rabindranath maintains, even at his lowest level, a height of tone and feeling, not because of easy technical skill, but because of the normal elevation of his mind and spirit. Supposing that the poetic achievement of a particular poet could be graphically represented, one would presumably measure the value of the poetry by three things taken separately or together : the highest point it reaches, its average height, and the horizontal line of its duration at that height. By the last two tests, we have no doubt that Rabindranath will eventually

come to be recognised as the greatest poet of the world ; and even by the first his place is secure among the greatest.

But before Rabindranath can find his true place in world literature there should be critics to do what for instance Coleridge and Lamb did for Shakespeare or Carlyle for Goethe. The ground should be cleared to give western readers the right approach to that considerable section of Rabindranath's poetry in which Thompson detects *zenana* imagery, want of grip and thinness of quality. It should be borne in mind that it would be no less difficult a task to make the western readers appreciate the beauties and graces of Rabindranath's poetry which have sprung more directly and exclusively from oriental traditions than to create among Indians a taste for European music. Moreover, we must remember that translations from Tagore's works have not only been meagre and inadequate, but in many cases definitely misleading in point of quality and strength. It is sad and depressing to think that a vast number of Rabindranath's lyrics and songs must remain a despair of all translators. Even the utmost ingenuity and mastery of technique would fail to transplant most of them alive in a foreign language. Yet there being no other way to bring them to the majority of readers who have no access to Bengali, the effort has to be made.

And another hard task awaits the interpreter of Rabindranath. The scope and range of criticism as it exists today in the West should be extended, a broader perspective and keener vision should be added to it in order that it may encompass and appraise the gifts of Tagore. It should be convincingly shown that variation is not necessarily repetition, that a poet can very well write more than one poem on what appears to be the same subject but really are altogether new creations differing in spirit and effect. It should be made clear that it would be no discredit to Shelley if he drew inspiration from the West Wind once again or to Keats if he found the nightingale stirring him to his depths on a second occasion though necessarily in a different manner. Indeed, western critics seem to set too much store by external novelty. At least

Thompson's idea seems to be that a poet should deal with a subject e. g. a storm, an ideal of beauty or joy, an aspect of nature etc. only once ; as if a poet could write twice on the *same* theme without ceasing to be a poet ; as if the excitement and interest of the poet were not sufficient proof of the *newness* of the theme, the uniqueness and value of the contents of the alleged repetitive efforts. Then again Thompson and those who are of the same school of thought would deny plenary inspiration to all poetry that has been or is capable of being retouched or altered by the poet. This indeed is an old prejudice. There is nothing to show that Sophocles or Dante or Shakespeare never felt the need of changing and improving their work after they had once done it. 'The poem writing itself' is a fable if it supposes perfect passivity in the poet. It has value as the indication of *one* of the ways in which poetry gets written or as an emphasis on the definiteness or emotional necessity of what forms the core of the poem. Some poems do come finished and whole, as if dictated from above ; some again appear in a more or less crude form and laboriously attain to the perfection which lay implicit in their conception as the tree lies in the seed. How a good poem emerges through a process of chiselling and polish may be illustrated by the practice of a great modern poet, W. B. Yeats. And indeed examples of such writing are obtainable in the work of most of the poets of the world who have stood the test of time. In Rabindranath we find abundant evidence of both the processes of poetic creation.

Yet another consideration that the critic should constantly keep in view is this : Poetry which touches life at innumerable points is capable of an almost infinite variety of shade and tone, gradation of height and intensity. The sublimities of the classics of every literature do not make lighter lyrical touches, as in Herrick, for example, valueless. Even light-heartedness and dilettantism may claim their proper poetic expression. Not that this is not understood. But the difficulty is that critics who would welcome different types of poetry in different poets, would

be suspicious of variety of types in one and tempted to call it 'unequal.' Thanks to Aristotle, critical notions regarding drama seem today to be clearer and more adequate, than in regard to other kinds of poetry. Shakespeare will be acclaimed even for the patches of low comedy one finds in his earlier plays, for creating the character of a worthless buffoon or a snob and finding appropriate language for him. This will be claimed as a proof of his myriad-mindedness, and we think, rightly. But a western critic is apt to be utterly confused when he comes across the light and buoyant poetry of *Kshamikā* or the polish and glitter of the elegant verses in *Mādhūā*. He would applaud Shakespeare all the more because he cannot classify and label his genius ; but he must call a great poet who writes non-dramatic poetry 'unequal' or inconsistent, if he cannot hold his genius inside a critical formula. If there is anything in the history of world literature that would bear comparison with the many-sidedness of Tagore's poetic genius, it is the genius of Shakespeare.

Our observation regarding the standard of dramatic criticism would seem justified by Thompson's achievement. His real and original contribution lies indeed in his very sincere and able criticism of Rabindranath's dramatic writings, regular plays as well as shorter pieces written in dialogue form, monologues in the manner of Browning and narrative poems as in *Kathā* and *Palātakā*. Here one feels, Thompson is on sure ground. His prejudice against the character of Grandfather, his half-hearted appreciation of *Phalgumi* and *Raja* and his complete misunderstanding of the value of *Achalāyatan* may indeed be disregarded in view of the pioneering work he has done in bringing out Rabindranath's excellent qualities as a dramatist.

J. C. Ghosh's *Bengali Literature* is definitely an important contribution to the history of that literature. The author has a two-fold advantage. Being a Bengali he has been able to support and enrich fruits of his research with his personal observation and understanding of life and manners in Bengal ; and by virtue

of his western education he has brought to his work some of the best qualities of western scholarship : clarity, thoroughness, precision, sense of proportion. His presentation even of the most complicated issues is as a rule lucid and attractive, showing a highly disciplined mind and a firm grip over his materials. The account that he gives of the religious movements and social and political forces that, according to him, have influenced Bengali literature may not in every case be beyond dispute, but it is always plausible and thought-provoking. Although the scope chosen is up to the end of the nineteenth century, the author has included a chapter on Rabindranath in view of his importance. The author has tried to mete out even-handed justice to the notable literary figures in Bengali literature, rescuing some of them from undeserved neglect and divesting some others of the uncritical praise they used to enjoy. His judicial method does not seem to go wrong as long as he is occupied with comparatively lesser figures. But when he deals with the most important writers like Bankimchandra, Saratchandra and Rabindranath, his method seems to become arbitrary to a considerable extent. He shows himself rather too ready to find faults, because, of course, there must be the defects to counterbalance the merits of a great writer. Not that some of the defects that he mentions are not true. But they have often been given a disproportionate emphasis. And there are some which exist only in the imagination of the author. For example he finds Rabindranath 'always most pleasant and charming', but 'rarely moving and convincing.' Again, 'very few poets outside the popular magazines have been so given to conceits and clichés as Tagore was'. He sees nothing more in Saratchandra Chattopadhyay than that he has imported artificial problems of sex and psychology from third-rate European novels. Bankim appears to him to be wholly sentimental and unintelligent. After an enumeration of such defects he proceeds to make sweeping statements regarding the value and importance of these writers. Bankimchandra is a very mediocre novelist, according to him.

Although Saratchandra does not come under his scope, his passing reference to him shows that he regards him as a third-rate writer. He has words of praise for Rabindranath of course and on the whole admits his greatness as a poet. But his comments purporting to bring out Rabindranath's faults betray, we are afraid, an inadequate knowledge and hasty judgment on the part of the commentator. The suspicion is bound to arise that the author's acquaintance with Rabindranath's works is in the main through the English versions, and his critical approach to him is mainly through the framework fashioned by Edward Thompson, the author's 'old teacher'. He has improved upon the text of his teacher by accentuating the faults mentioned by the latter and adding to them some of his own invention. But the respectfulness and sense of justice that keep Thompson's remarks sober and undogmatic and give them the character of suggestions rather than that of final judgment are entirely absent in his treatment. In his eagerness to profit by the lessons of correctness and balance he has learned from the West, J. C. Ghosh has allowed his appreciation to suffer. He seems to forget that the major task of a critic is to enter into the mind and spirit of the writer chosen and that judgment can function only after these continued efforts at self-identification have yielded the richest results.

## CULTURE AND THE CROSS

GURDIAL MALLIK

CULTURE AND THE CROSS are but the two sides of the same coin,—the Truth of Life. And the truth of life means life in truth.

What, however, is Truth ? They say, humanity has been waiting for the last twenty centuries for an answer to that question of Pilate. Perhaps, it has been awaiting an answer not for centuries but for millenia. For, Pilate was not the first person in history who put this question ; many another person had done this prior to him, the question being addressed not always to any Teacher, as Pilate did to Christ, but to his own conscience or Higher Self.

There is also another aspect of the matter. Every one in his own way, and according to his own humble lights, has been striving, ever since Man appeared on the stage of evolution, to answer to himself the question of questions, "What is Truth ?" And there have been as many answers as there are varieties of the human mind. That is why Truth is nobody's monopoly. As Rabindranath Tagore once wrote in someone's autograph book, years ago, "Truth is greater than the greatest of teachers."

But behind all these diverse definitions and descriptions of Truth, what has been sensed by every enquirer is the common consciousness—in a lesser or greater degree,—that Truth is something above the maze, mirrors and monkey-tricks of the mind or the Inner Self. Therefore, he has argued with himself, even though, more often than not, he might not implement the argument in his own conduct, that to perceive Truth he must transcend the many-faceted mind or to use the terminology of Patanjali in his exposition of *Yoga*, "suppress the transformations of the thinking principle" ( which principle, as he explains

further, is fourfold : consisting of *manas*, the principle which cognises generally ; *chitta*, individualising, the idea which fixes itself upon a point and makes the object its own by making it an individual ; *ahankara*, egoism, the persuasion which connects the individual with the self ; and *Buddhi*, reason, the light that determines one way or another ).

In other words, it is freedom from the fetters of the mind ( however gilded and glamorous ) which opens up for a person the possibility of his perceiving truth. But the tragedy in the case of a very large majority of us, is that we cling to these fetters as tenaciously as a slave does to his chains.

And yet it is the purpose of Culture as well as of the Cross to forge freedom out of these very fetters, to evoke the illumination of the spirit from the illusions of the mind. For, such is the ancient tradition in the East, "From where comes Light," that the Buddha must be born of the womb of Maya !

The cry of the Cross is, "Thy will be done !" —the will of the All-being, All-knowing, All-doing, All-dispensing, so that the symphony of Life may not be broken, or the orchestral unity of the universe may not be strained or snapped.

And what is the call of Culture ? It is to shift the emphasis in one's own life from "me and mine" to "thee and thine", in order that the choral collectivity of the cosmos may be maintained.

Thus, Culture and the Cross, both point the way to "Thee" and "That," and, therefore, they are inter-related in essence. In short, the objective of the votary of the Cross and that of the votary of Culture is to ally themselves consciously with God and His Plan, or with the Law and the Law-maker, both of which, as Gandhiji says, are one. And it is in the cultivation of certain such processes and practices in his life as will help a person to evolve and establish this alliance that the significance of the Cross and the Culture consists.

Now the pith and marrow of these various practices and processes is to achieve freedom from the transformation, trickery,



tinsel and tyranny of the mind. And only those who have trodden the path know that the path to this freedom is paved with pain. There is, however, a secret and sacred joy in this pain, it being akin to the pain of the lover for his beloved. This joy springs from the fact that the individual has ceased to think of himself exclusively, as if he alone were the hub of the universe, and at long last begun to think of another, beside himself. Then there comes a time when for the votary of the Cross and for the votary of Culture, as for the lover, their longing for freedom from the snare of the self and the senses becomes synonymous with the joyous pain it presupposes. But they all rejoice in this pain, for they know that this pain is but the birth-pang of "the second birth," which will bring him freedom from the manacles and machinations of the mind, just as the babe in the mother's womb longing for freedom to enter into the larger world, joyously sacrifices the security of the womb even though this freedom is attended with the pain of separation from sheltered existence. Truly, as Rabindranath Tagore sings :

Freedom is in pain which is pure,  
which is in harmony with the boundless,  
in which the scheme of self-deceit is destroyed,  
and which flings on the dust the cage of  
the living death of vain longing.

Summing up, the message and meaning of the Cross and Culture are, to quote from *The Voice of the Silence* :

Guard thou the Lower lest it soil the Higher,  
The way to final freedom is within thy Self,  
That way begins and ends outside the Self.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE : A TWO-WAY TRAFFIC

*By* PEARL S. BUCK

WE ARE TODAY APPROACHING the dawn of a worldwide renaissance. Never before in history has the whole world, at one time, come within the range of such potentiality. Throughout centuries there have been interchange and mutual stimulation between sections, regional responses which brought Chinese ideas as well as goods to Greece, and Greek ideals and art to China. The similarity between the philosophies of a Jewish Jesus and a Chinese Confucius are not accidental. Greece had her day in India, and Persia made the amalgam. Roman conquerors looked eastward, and might have marched there, had not their own successes produced decadence and so downfall. Europe admired the Orient, and when England saw the richness of India, it was with envy and desire, and not with superiority. Whatever the cause of contact, whether peaceful or warlike, the result brought new life to the participants.

But today is unique. Perhaps any age seems unique to those who live in it, and yet I think that we who live now have a peculiar right to use the word. Never before has the earth been a whole, as it is today, nor has it appeared so to as many people. Slowly everywhere men and women, often unwillingly it is true, are coming to understand that peoples cannot be free of one another. The self-sufficient farmer in the United States is realizing that even he cannot maintain his way of living unless he sells his surplus harvests to people hungrier than he is. When the hungry are unable to buy, as in India and England, not from lack of money but from a disjointed currency, the American farmer begins to rebel as well as the hungry. Necessity is forcing upon us all a simplification of our complex international

life. Nationalism is becoming a nuisance. Unless it is made flexible, it may even damage patriotism, by which it is maintained.

It is this demand for commonsense in practical international relationships which is forcing governments to take such steps as President Truman's Point 4. However inadequately his plans are carried out, the fact remains that its mere announcement constitutes a recognition that the world is one. Sooner or later, depending upon economic pressure from peoples, the world will function as one. The first step, of course, will be economic. A flowing interchange of trade whereby people can be fed and clothed and sheltered is now inevitable, whatever the obstacles that will be placed by those who have prospered by old conditions. Their day is gone, whether they know it or not. Tomorrow is only a brief space away.

Reluctantly even the prosperous are beginning to understand that "backward peoples" must be educated, the undeveloped areas developed, if not for their own sake then for the sake of those who wish to maintain their present standards of living. Countries such as the United States, which produce more than their people can buy, at least at present prices, must be able to sell to outside peoples, and these peoples must be educated to the point of wanting the new goods and developed to the degree of being able to buy them. Crudely put, this is the vague idea behind much of the planning today. One may denounce the motives as selfish and short-sighted, but denunciation is of little worth. The human creature, at least in aggregate, is selfish and the rich and the powerful are of course selfish. Putting denunciation aside, the cheerful fact is that whatever the reasons for the determination to educate the backward peoples and develop the undeveloped areas, the process begins. Once begun, we may trust to the peoples, however backward they may be considered, to shape the process as it goes on, and in that shaping we shall all be modified. It will be impossible to have the Chinese peasant educated without his also educating us.

The Chinese have educated more people than have ever educated them. India has already shown the unconquerable independence of her mind and spirit. In the contact that is now inevitable between the peoples of Occident and Orient the greatest change will come in the Occident. It will not be so visible, at first, as the change in the Orient. A refrigerator is a monstrously visible thing but the change in a man's attitude toward life is far more important and powerful.

Let us consider the peoples who today are lumped together into "the backward." They are primarily the peoples of Asia and Africa and secondarily some of the peoples of South America. True, it is conceded that in all countries there are spots of modern civilization, individuals of profound culture. There is no lack of admiration for these, no unwillingness to grant their superiority. In the average American for example, there is today a humility almost touching toward such figures as Gandhi and Nehru, as formerly there was toward President and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek. There is a consciousness, almost endemic in western peoples, that the great men and saints of the East "have something." We can be quite wistful about this something, feeling it is a wisdom beyond us. Humility and wistfulness promptly disappear, however, when we contemplate the hut of the Indian peasant, the dusty village home of the Chinese. His instruments of living seem to us primitive to the point of absurdity. We do not understand that one reason why we are unable to grasp the greatness of the saint or sage is that we can consider the instruments of his life absurd. When Gandhi drank goats' milk and ate boiled spinach and a handful of beans few of us understood or believed that he really preferred to do this, and that to him it was a better way of life than roasted meats upon a silver spread table.

We must not think that the people we consider backward consider themselves so for one moment. The Chinese, while pleased to observe our machines, will not want to complicate his life with most of them, except perhaps in extreme city conditions.

A gas range may be as useful in a small two-room apartment in Shanghai as it is in New York. It cannot compare, as a means of cooking good food in the Chinese fashion—which let us admit is the best in the world—with an earthen oven, a couple of cauldrons, and plenty of quick firing grass, or for that matter a brazier of charcoals. Having achieved the height of sophistication, which is the ultimate in simplicity, it is not likely that the ancient peoples of the East will allow their ordered lives to become confused by much machinery. Any American woman who has too many gadgets in her kitchen will know what I mean. Simple instruments are the most efficient. The Chinese woman has them. If she takes to using cans she will, of course, need an American can opener but she will probably prefer fresh food to canned, and a newly killed fowl to one from a freezer. On the other hand, the woman in India will doubtless welcome a refrigerator, because of the climate. But it must be within her economy, and she will not want to wait until her income reaches the figure sufficient to buy an American one lest that be never. The firm who first puts on the Indian market a refrigerator which needs no electricity will make an immense profit.

To educate the backward peoples to the point of adopting American or European goods at current prices is therefore a dream that may never come to pass. In the first place, the backward peoples are, unfortunately for dreamers, not backward at all. Being old, they are clever and intelligent and worldly wise folk, whether or not they read and write. Literacy has not been a necessity for developing the mind, among most of the earth's peoples. The mind develops itself, if it is there.

I believe in universal literacy and consider it the primary duty of such bodies as UNESCO to bring it about, for only when the world's peoples are all literate can there be world communication through literature and news. Universal literacy is essential for peace and understanding. To the individual mind it adds resources, but, it is not an essential. Some of the

wisest and most sophisticated minds I have known belonged to persons who could not read and write and were far less backward actually than I was myself. True, if people can read, they can read advertisements, and advertisements, it is said, stir the desire to possess goods. It may be so. But wise people are usually without the desire to possess more than they can use. Simplicity is part of the religion and philosophy of the very countries which today are called backward. Since these religions and philosophies have existed for thousands of years and have grown out of the life of the people who possess them, it is not likely that pictures of electric apparatus and beauty-rest mattresses will soon disturb them.

Yet there is a real soundness in the slowly forming desire of President Truman to increase the material benefits of life for peoples in the undeveloped areas. It would not be wise, however to forward such action purely upon selfish premises. China, for example, needs food but only temporarily. It is a widespread myth, repeated in the highest places, that the chief problem of the Chinese people is hunger. This is not true. The primary need is not for food, but first for peace and then for better roads. China has or can have plenty of food. She has the richest soil in the world, generally speaking. Over forty centuries of farming, her soil has been maintained. True, she has allowed her land to become eroded in some sections, but it is a relatively small area in proportion to her total farm land. Anyone who lived in China before the last war must have been impressed daily with the wonder and the variety of the food markets. The variety in vegetables alone was far greater than in an average American market, or even indeed in our so-called super-markets. Of water and land tubers the Chinese eat a score and more, of nuts and fruits and leafy plants several times as many as we Americans eat. Of fish and meats they know as palatable many that we reject, and they find proteins where we do not suspect them. Food is not only an essential to the Chinese, it is a pleasure, and fine cookery, even among the lowly, is a tradition. When I

look at the poor pasty product which we Americans call our daily bread and remember the many kinds of Chinese bread, dark and light, baked and steamed and browned in deep fat, I wonder which is the backward people. China is a land rich in food and the Chinese are generous feeders. Their famines have always come not from an actual shortage of food but from disasters such as flood, drought, or war. Communications are so poor that food cannot be supplied from another region quickly enough or easily enough to mend local damage, and this accounts for the refugees who pour from one part into another in a famine. It was actually cheaper, in the last famine in which I took part in relieving, to ship grain across the Pacific Ocean from the United States than it was to carry it on donkey and man back from another province three hundred miles away, where there was plenty of food for sale.

China needs roads. A network of good motor roads and the vehicles to use on them in addition to a few vital railways and airlines would serve her food problems. Her agriculture is highly developed. Modern agriculture has not much to teach the Chinese farmer beyond some methods in seed selection and insect and disease control. In fertilisation he is a master, but he needs to be taught that human manure cannot be applied direct to soil from which food is taken. There must be an intermediary step to prevent the carrying of germs. In north China this lesson has already been learned.

Nor is land distribution a primary problem in China. In spite of much talk to the contrary, comparatively little of China's land is in the hands of big owners. The average farm is small and intensely cultivated. Primogeniture is not the rule. A man's land at his death is divided between all his sons, but it is recognized that at least five acres is needed to maintain a family and sons scatter to other jobs than farming, maintaining the home nevertheless upon the land.

The lesson we must learn is that the Chinese are not backward at all. China does need material development of a few

vast but simple sorts. Industrially she ought not to allow herself to make plans for highly centralized industries. Her people will be happier and richer if they develop many small decentralized plants. It is always dangerous for an agricultural people to pass quickly into industry. They have not the weapons wherewith to defend themselves against exploitation. They must not allow themselves to become merely cheap labour, either to their own kind or to foreigners, and it should be the concern of all of us that this does not happen.

India is very different indeed from China. There the agriculture is really undeveloped, and the soil has not been made to adapt itself to the difficult climatic conditions. I shall never forget my dismay once when visiting India in February to discover that in spite of heat in which crops could certainly grow and mature, vast areas were dry and useless, supporting not even the bone-thin cattle that wandered upon their surfaces. Water was the lack. Yet today there need not be lack of water anywhere. Science can and should work to produce water from reservoirs and seas, and deep wells can be driven by co-operative means. The firm that first devises a way to drive deep wells cheaply and co-operatively in an Indian village and provides pipes cheaply enough for irrigation will reap a harvest of gold.

Medical service is of course needed everywhere. It is a problem not yet solved even in the United States, where medical research strides ahead with its astounding and comforting discoveries for human ills, although much of what is discovered is still beyond the power of the average citizen to buy without mortgaging all he possesses. The very poor receive charity, the rich buy what they like, but the average man dreads the doctor's bills. This is as much a problem as is the almost total lack of hospitals in China and the short span of life in India and Africa. Medicine and medical knowledge must be taken out of the markets and put at the service of mankind. I do not say how this is to be done but only that it must be done, and it is hypocritical to cry out at the backwardness of some peoples, who



have no means of knowledge, when we ourselves have the knowledge and will not use it except for a price.

Primary in the Eastern countries, too, and specially in China, is the need for the development of a spirit of service to mankind, which will provide satisfaction sufficient for educated youngmen and women to be willing to undergo the isolations of living in country places. In addition to the skills taught in great modern medical centres, where every facility has been developed, we need even more the greater skills which can teach a graduate of such a centre how to use what he knows in an Indian or Javanese village, where he must fashion his own tools and build his own hospital. It has been done by a few and so it can be done, but such deeds are produced first by spiritual energy and in modern medicine there is far too little of the necessary spirit. I fear to think of young doctors from the countries which need them most learning modern medicine and the attitudes which seem to go with it. A sacrificial heart is absolutely essential if the peoples are to be served and led toward better health and longer lives, and if the children are not to die, most of them before they live a year.

And will there not be more people than the earth can support ? This is said often and much discussed, but actually it is the master myth of our times. Robert Owen, the great English industrialist, said in his book, *A New View of Society*, published in 1812, "The fear of any evil to rise from an excess of population until such time as the whole earth shall become a cultivated garden, will, on due and accurate investigation, prove a mere phantom of the imagination, calculated solely to keep the worker in unnecessary ignorance, vice and crime. ...It is the artificial supply of law and demand, arising from the principle of individual gain in opposition to the wellbeing of society, which have hitherto compelled population to press on subsistence."

Truer words were never spoken, truer today than then. Owen was hated and ostracised by his fellow industrialists for speaking them and for practising ways to prove them true.

Individual gain has always and will always oppose the wellbeing of society if it is allowed to do so. Meanwhile a small but honest group of scientists today are struggling to make themselves heard in corroboration of what Robert Owen said more than a hundred years ago. They are telling us that the earth is not overpopulated, that far more food can be grown on the land, that the sea is a vast storehouse of food scarcely touched, that science has only just begun to produce food. The most casual traveller in Canada, for example, cannot but be impressed with the monstrous loss to the world in the vast land there unused. Thousands of square miles of forest continue on fine fertile soil, and thousands of square miles more stand burned and naked and useless. Canada herself would benefit by a flood of farming people, who could add immeasurable quantities of food to the world's store beside feeding themselves and their families. All large countries, including the United States, have great unused territories, not to speak of the areas which are carelessly and wickedly farmed. South America is scarcely touched agriculturally. It is said that Brazil alone, if adequately farmed, could feed the world. Even in China there are lands which could be used for food and are idle. In India, as I have said, the land is producing a minimum of what it could. The same is true of Australia.

Food is being the first problem of the world's peoples, it should and can easily be solved, were those in the position of individuals versus the well-being of society willing to have the problem solved. In the solution of any problem there are those who profit from the very existence of the problem, and these will naturally oppose solution. They are shortsighted through fear. A world at ease for all will be a safer world for all.

There are no insuperable material difficulties in the development of a well fed and contented world of peoples. Nothing in Asia, not numbers of people nor conditions, presents difficulties beyond the ability present in the world today to solve. The one profound and real difficulty is in the unwillingness of a

relatively few, but powerful and articulate, persons to cast their individual lot with the well-being of society. In any community one finds one or two of these persons, outnumbered always, and yet holding somehow the reins of power. Plans have been made, blue-prints are ready, resources are available for the new day, but the conductors will not give the signal. In this fact and this alone is basic obstruction.

I do not know what the answer is to this one most grave problem. I do not believe in forcible compulsions. I stand steadfastly against the violence of revolutions and liquidations. The desired end to anything never comes if the means be foul. I have therefore no suggestion and it may be that all I have said and advocated fails because of this. Yet I reflect that these persons are few, though powerful, and that in any community if the people be sufficiently sure of what they must have they can and do prevail. Since peoples are aroused by knowing that now it is entirely possible for all to be well fed, educated and well governed, time may not save these few, as it has in the past.

I do not know. I simply say that while I do not believe that there are any backward peoples, I know that there are great undeveloped areas in our world. The emphasis needs to be put upon the development of these areas, physically in communications, food and public health ; mentally in literacy and cultural interchange, and spiritually in mutual understanding and willingness to sacrifice. I know, too, that there is the means for this development, and it is simple in action. The United Nations and its agencies can direct the development of food and plenty, with young men at their command. Of public health we know well enough how to drive major diseases from the globe. James Yen in China has devised and proved a simple means to literacy, and others have done as much in other contries. We are ready to march forward, as soon as "the artificial law of supply and demand, arising from the principle of individual gain in opposition to the well-being of society," allows it.

## THE LYRICAL POEMS OF HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

*By* CHARLES WHARTON STORK

A WESTERN literary critic will be most pleasantly surprised in his first contact with modern Indian culture. With true philosophic insight the Indian scholar picks out from the west whatever is of universal significance, in particular whatever affirms the unity of spiritual experience for all times and lands. It is for this reason that I would ask the attention of Indian readers to a contemporary Austrian poet, profoundly admired by a small circle but never likely to appeal to a wide public. He told me himself that he wrote for only about five hundred people in Europe. In that meagre estimate he was much too modest.

The poet is Hugo von Hofmannsthal, a Viennese, whose dates are 1874-1929. I first read him in London in 1905 and later came to know his work more fully on a visit to Austria the following year. To the younger Viennese intellectuals, he was the one author in German to be seriously considered at the moment. The astonishing quality of his genius was that at the age of seventeen to twenty he was writing short verse plays and lyrics that for depth of thought and perfection of form were superior to anything in German literature since Goethe. Stefan Zweig, the famous critic, describes with awe the impression he produced at the debut of his career.

From the beginning Hofmannsthal lived in a world of his own atmosphere, a timeless world of beauty. In this he was like Keats and some of the French so-called Parnassian poets of the middle century. But he was more compressed, more impersonal, more definite in his artistic intentions than Keats. His central thesis is, that "the poet, in order to depict life as it really is, must take no part in it." He soon became associated with

two similar-minded German poets, Stefan George and Rainer Maria Rilke, in a protest against the realistic tendencies of the time. What he says of George is equally applicable to himself : "He so completely conquered life, so absolutely mastered it, that from his poems the rare, indescribable peace and refreshing coolness of a still, dark temple are wafted upon our noise-racked senses." An American critic, Miss Elizabeth Walter, has phrased this idea in an article in a specialized magazine, *The Colonnade*, December, 1916, New York. "Every one of Hofmannsthal's poems expresses some condition of the soul in terms of beauty, and always the universal behind the beautiful."

That I was immediately fascinated by Hofmannsthal may be readily understood. I at once began translating his first volume, entitled simply, "The Poems," and completed the work in Salzburg in the summer of 1914, in the midst of the alarms of the war. It was published in 1918 by the Yale University Press, New Haven, and Humphrey Milford of the Oxford University Press, London. The unusual fact to me personally is that today the lyrics of Hofmannsthal have still the same magic of form and an even greater significance of thought.

It seems obvious that the only way to give an idea of Hofmannsthal to an audience without access to his poetry in German is by liberal quotation. I am encouraged in this by the generous comment on my translation in a review in the *London Times*. Another favourable circumstance is that Hofmannsthal's poems are short and packed with meaning. Let me present first "A Vision" ( *Erlebnis* ) :

The valley with a silver-grayish mist  
Of twilight was o'erbrimmed, as when the moon  
Filters through clouds. And yet it was not night.  
In the silver-grayish mist of yon dark valley  
My twilight-shimmering thoughts were wholly blended ;  
Softly I sank into the shifting depths  
Of that transparent sea—and left this life.  
What wondrous flowers bloomed about me there  
With darkly glowing chalices ! dim thickets

Transfused with streams of reddish-yellow light,  
 Warm as a glowing topaz. And the vale  
 Was filled with deep vibrating harmony  
 Of melancholy music. Then I knew—  
 Though how, I comprehend not—yet I knew  
 That this was Death ; Death was transformed to music,  
 Mightily, yearning, sweet, and darkly glowing,  
 Akin to deepest melancholy.

Yet—

How strange ! a sort of homesickness for life  
 Wept silently within my soul, it wept  
 As one may weep when on a towering ship,  
 That drives toward evening with gigantic sails  
 Across the dark-blue waves, he passes by  
 A town, his native town. He sees before him  
 The streets, he hears the fountains gush, he breathes  
 The scent of lilac-bushes ; on the bank  
 He sees himself a child with childish eyes  
 Anxious and almost weeping, sees a light  
 Through the wide window burning in his room.—  
 But the huge vessel bears him ever on,  
 Silently speeding o'er the dark-blue waves  
 With giant sails of yellow, strangely shaped.

In this the blending of the theme, Death, with the glowing picture and the deep, cello-like music of the verse is most characteristic. The union of inward and outward is perfectly sustained ; in fact, as the poet has himself said, there is no real distinction between the two. The emotion is transformed into symbol and the symbolism is enriched by the verbal harmony. Thus the reader feels, sees and hears simultaneously.

From the philosophic point of view, it will be noted that Hofmannsthal thinks unity, he brings out the latent connection between all times, all places and all things, whether spiritual or material. This appears in the lines from "Interdependence" ( *Manche Freilich. . .* ) :

From the weariness of forgotten peoples  
 Vainly would I liberate mine eyelids,

Or would keep my startled soul at distance  
From the silent fall of far-off planets.

Even more striking are the concluding lines of "A Dream of the Higher Magic" :

Our soul's a Cherub, and of lordly birth—  
Dwells not in us, but in some upper star  
Fixes his throne and leaves us oft in dearth.  
Yet deep in us his fiery motions are :—  
So in my dream I seemed to understand—  
And he holds converse with yon fires afar,  
And lives in me as I do in my hand.

The poet has here undertaken to solve the problems of time and space, of appearance and reality, by assuming all these to be conditions of our thinking ; which therefore the mind, under special stimulus, can transcend.

It is not, however, true that Hofmannsthal can never be simple. Take the third of his "Three Little Songs" :

My mistress said : "I hold thee not,  
No promise hast thou sworn.  
The sons of men should not be bound,  
To faith they are not born.

"Then go what way thou wilt, my friend,  
Beholding many a land,  
And rest thyself in many a bed,  
Take many a woman's hand.

"If bitter wines no longer please,  
Drink thou of malmsey then ;  
And if my mouth seems yet more sweet,  
Come back to me agen."

This is wholly human, and so likewise is the symbolism of "The Two", where the lady offers the cup of wine to the knight ; but when their fingers touch, the cup is spilled between them.

We have been considering the section of what the poet calls the "purely lyrical pieces" of his volume. We come now to

the more objective, "Figure.". Let us take "The Ship's Cook, a Captive, Sings" :

Many weary weeks divide me  
From my folk,—unlucky sinner !—  
Worse, howe'er my foes deride me,  
Still I needs must cook their dinner.

Lovely purple-gleaming fishes,  
Brought me living from the water,  
Stare with failing eyes reproachful ;  
Gentle beasts, too, I must slaughter.

Gentle beasts, too, I must slaughter,  
Fruit must peel or cut in slices.  
And for those who hate and scorn me  
Must compound the fiery spices.

While I work beneath the lantern,  
Mid the sweet, sharp odors reeling,  
Thoughts of freedom rouse within me  
Mighty throbs of savage feeling !

Many weary weeks divide me  
From my folk,—unlucky sinner ;  
Worse, howe'er my foes deride me,  
Still I needs must cook their dinner.

A homely character, this cook, yet he is brought very close to us. We share his irksome confinement, his spirit of fierce rebellion.

Among the other "Figures" of this group, we find "The Emperor of China", "Lines to a Little Child" ( a fairy tale piece ), and "Society". The last-named is particularly subtle and delicate.

*Singer*

Listeners, if ye be but young,  
Mighty is the power of song ;  
It can make you sad or gay,  
Swift it bears the soul away.



*Stranger*

Peoples live both far and near ;  
What I show, ye gladly hear—  
Not the heart of many lands,  
But, as 'twere, the play of hands.

*Young Man*

Much that wakens joy in me  
Through the fluttering scene is weaved,  
But so phantom-shadowy :  
Happy—I'm as one deceived.

*Poet*

What a soft reflected tone  
Glimmers here from guest to guest—  
Each one, feeling as alone,  
Feels his being in the rest.

*Painter*

As between the candles bright  
So between the faces white  
See the fluttering laughter play !

*Stranger*

Song can make one sad or gay.

*Poet*

Great the power of song must be—  
Peoples live both far and near.

*Young Man*

What they say I gladly hear,  
Though 'tis phantom-shadowy.

Note the varying play of the moods, as they interchange from one character to another.

We come next to five Prologues and Addresses-of-Mourning. In these we are struck by the poet's interest in the drama, which was to develop later in his activities as a playwright. There are several splendid passages in the tribute to Austria's great Shakespearian actor, Mitterwarzer.

In His Mouth

There was a gulf, wherein the ocean surged.

Even more poignant are the lines on the actor, Hermann Muller ;

But when the play was quenched and when the curtain  
Silently like a painted eyelid fell  
Across the cavern of dead wizardry,  
And he himself went forth, a stage was then  
Opened before him in such wise it seemed  
A staring, ever sleepless eye, a stage  
On which no pitying curtain ever sinks :  
The terror-striking stage, Reality.  
Then all his arts of transformation fell  
Away from him, and his poor spirit went  
Unveiled and could but see through childish eyes.

Seldom, surely, shall we find the contrast between the artist and the man more feelingly portrayed.

The volume closes with a short dramatic "Idyll" in neo-classic form, in which a centaur runs away with the wife of a smith. The smith symbolizes the ideal of duty, the centaur the spirit of adventure. The wife is captivated by the centaur's description, as he "stamped the heather into scent by night,

Roaming beneath the hyacinthine dusk."

As the centaur rushes off with his prize, the smith flings a spear and mortally wounds the woman.

As already mentioned, Hofmannsthal shifted his interest from pure to dramatic poetry, never returning to the lyric. Among his longer plays two became widely known as libretti for operas by Richard Strauss. In "Elektra" he re-created the

famous Greek tragedy in modern psychological form, not with complete success. His other opera, the "Rosenkavalier", is entirely different. It is a society comedy of rococo Vienna, partly realistic and partly tending toward farce. A great favourite with the public, it can hardly be recommended to admirers of the poet on his more serious side.

It is therefore that some of us return continually to Hofmannsthal's early poems and shorter plays, finding in them something that belongs with the work of the greatest masters of all countries and periods. Their appeal is dateless and universal, for they deal with the most profound experiences of the human soul in terms of imperishable beauty.

## EDGAR ALLAN POE

By ALBERT BEGUIN

EDGAR ALLAN POE, one of the strangest geniuses of modern times, was born in America ; France, however, might well claim to have given him to the world and even to America. For it was in France that his influence was first felt and French poetry, more than any other, has drawn permanent inspiration from his work. Even today, Americans frequently wonder at the echo which the author of *Eureka* found in Baudelaire, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Mallarmé and, as this latter put it, "the whole generation". Edgar Allan Poe has his admirers in his native land, but I doubt if the appreciation of his countrymen equals the reverence in which he is held by most Europeans.

Yet to us Edgar Allan Poe is as completely American as Melville, Hawthorne or Henry James, and the fantastic world which his stories open up for us could have sprung only from the New World. For where else could one situate those misty and mysterious lakes invaded by sudden shadows where the ghosts of *Tales of Mystery and of Imagination* pursue their troubled destiny ? Was not Poe's very life, his success as well as his misfortune, the direct outcome of the conditions prevailing in the New Country where the growth of a new and freer social structure clashed with the rigid traditions and principles imported from Europe ? The past weighed less heavily than the future on a nation eager for progress, forever seeking a new way of life. Thus did Poe find himself engaged in a painful struggle not only against the static force of tradition which his creative mind could not accept, but also against the surge towards an untried future which was foreign to his own particular genius.

Let us not imagine, however, as Baudelaire seems to have

done, that Poe owed his country nothing more than the obstacles which stimulated his creative genius. The secret dualism of his personal life was not without parallel in that internal struggle which historic circumstances shaped in the heart of nineteenth century America. He carried these two conflicting tendencies within his spiritual conscience. The dual pressure of the past and of the future affected him personally as it did his country. Or, expressing this dilemma in psychological terms which would more clearly show the poet's particularities, we may say that Poe was forever torn between a dual desire, which has found its admirable and tragic expression in his work : the desire of loyalty, symbolized in the mourning for a dead mother, a lost wife and a vanished childhood, and the urge for free conquest which inspired his nostalgic soul with amazing confidence in the almost boundless powers of the human spirit. Here is the source of two characteristic aspects of his writing : his power of evocation, this unfailing gift which creates the unforgettable atmosphere of his stories, and the meticulous architecture of their construction.

It is a curious fact that the "magnificent drunkard of Baltimore", as Guillaume Apollinaire called him, was first admired in France more than in America for his most American quality : that is, for his contention that a work of art can be built by as precise a method as the work of science or the practical organisation of life. No one before him had dared to think of poetry as depending to such a degree upon the application of a technique. Without him, Baudelaire would not have called himself "the architect of his dream-world," Mallarmé would not have devoted his life to the search for an absolute knowledge through the development of the precise word, and Paul Valéry would not have pursued so desperately his systematic search for a supreme magic. It is for the example and the hope which Poe held out that Baudelaire called him "one of the great literary heroes" ; and for this same bold paradox, Mallarmé saw in him "the absolute literary case" and "the pure among the Spirits."

It would, however, be a grave error to consider Poe's work as a pure intellectual experience, the result of laboratory synthesis. Mallarmé recognized this clearly enough when he said that in Poe's work "the song rises from an innate source, preceding all thought." And Baudelaire would not have felt bound to him in a mystical brotherhood had he not recognized in his work some mysterious depths. He devoted years of his life to translating Poe at the expense of his own writing. This humble devotion, the daily victory over the Baudelerian demon of procrastination will be fully understood only in the light of certain pages of the *Journal Intime*; these prayers in which he evokes Edgar Allan Poe as a pacifying angel bear witness that Baudelaire was as keenly aware of the personal drama of the man with whom he identified himself as he was interested in the problems of the writer whose work he had undertaken to translate.

More light has been shed on the drama of Edgar Allan Poe by Madame Marie Bonaparte, in one of the few works of literary psycho-analysis, the methods and results of which are beyond dispute. In this remarkable book, Madame Bonaparte has shown that the neurosis from which Poe was suffering was primarily caused by an obsession deriving from the death of his mother. The frequency with which the symbol of death recurs in his stories, his collapse at the death of his wife, the fears from which he finally sought refuge in alcohol, all become clear in the light of her interpretation. She also takes into account the inherent necessity which led Poe to build up the imaginary paradise of his poetry and to come to believe that the act of poetic invention could, in the end, gain him a foothold in the timeless worlds which are free from earthly malediction.

Another French thinker, Gaston Bachelard, has recently offered, in his book *L'Eau et les Rêves* (Water and Dreams), another psycho-analysis of Poe according to his own particular method. Rather than diagnose the psychological events which determine the course of a life and the development of an artist's personality, Mr. Bachelard analyses the images of the poet,

particularly those which endow a concrete subject with emotional value. Bachelard recognizes in Poe that striking unity of imagination which is the stamp of a great mind and shows how the "song" is born from the unconscious life and how it draws its magic from the "innate source" as Mallarmé has called it. All of Poe's writing reveals the suffering of a loneliness which has been wounded from the first by harsh reality and has been bent ever since in finding refuge in a more beautiful existence.

The uninformed reader who may take small stock of the closely-knit structure *Tales of Mystery and of Imagination* or *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, will be struck by the tragic adventures which are always set against the background of some deep and melancholy water. At times, a shadow falls across the water or rises from its depths. At times, there is complete silence, the silence of a nightmare or of an enchanted land. This world is hardly different from everyday reality, nothing in it seems to vibrate with "secrets that cannot be told". It is a kingdom of death, but of a welcome death, the peaceful slumber of the drowned, floating downstream. It is also the marvellous reflections in still water, which evokes a purer, lighter and happier universe.

This symbolic use of water in its various superimposed forms is interesting not only from a psychological point of view. This symbolism which links Death and Beauty, the water of ultimate sleep and the water of reflected transparency in the same images, has the quality of reconciliation. In this self-confession which can only be expressed in pathetic language, Poe succeeds in overcoming his initial dualism. His biographers, who have made abundant use of the poetic and picturesque episodes of his life, have persistently pointed out his failures and his insufficiencies. It is no doubt true that his life, often deplorable as it was, seems that of a defeated man. But this aspect of his life is apt to obscure the triumph of the spirit and the heroism of an unrelenting struggle. Poe's true greatness, which fully warrants the exceptional esteem in which he is held,

is to have created a work of pure lucidity out of a dark and sombre destiny.

His glory is also to have been among the first to understand the twofold requirements of poetry : its source must be sought in the depth of the human soul, in those shadows and silences where the struggle of man with his destiny is carried on—but these depths remain obscure, inaccessible to the conscious mind, uncontrollable and shapeless to all but a bold spirit who sets out to explore them with all the resources of a completely mastered craft.

The Centenary of the death of this great American dreamer comes but a few years before an important French anniversary. A century of poetry and poetic knowledge began in France in 1852, when, for the first time, Gerard de Nerval and Charles Baudelaire wrote the name of Edgar Allan Poe.





## REVIEWS OF BOOKS, BOOK NOTES

*Hindu View of Christ.* By SWAMI AKHILANANDA : Philosophical Library, New York. 291 pp. \$ 3.00.

A Hindu view of Christ has long been a desideratum. Western Christian scholars, greatly daring, have poured forth their studies of the religious systems and founders of all the non-Christian religions of the world, many of them showing deplorable lack of insight into the genius of those religions. Hinduism which has borne the brunt of most of those attacks, as well as of the highly organised efforts at the conversion of its masses into the Christian fold, has the right as well as the duty, not to counter-attack—that would be inconsonant with the spirit of Hinduism and of true religion—but to assess the truth and significance of this virile religion stemming from a totally different stock, in the light of its own millennial quest and realisation of spiritual truth. But that assessment must take full account of what is distinctive in the genius and emphasis of Christianity, which true to its Semitic origins sees God in history, and stands or falls by the validity of its interpretation of the working out of God's purposes in the historical process. An understanding of the historical Jesus, in the setting in which he appeared, is thus fundamental to any true estimate of the Christian religion. The book under review is unconcerned about such problems and cannot therefore be regarded as meeting the need of a really Hindu view of Jesus, the Christ.

The book starts with an exposition of the Hindu view of incarnation and seeks to fit Jesus into that pattern. But facts do not always fit in with ready-made theories. "They (incarnations) have no internal or external conflicts", says our author. Whether this be true of other incarnations, whose claims are set forth in the book, it certainly was not true of Jesus of Nazareth, who even according to a Biblical writer, "though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered", who wrestled with his God in prayer till his sweat came out as blood ere he submitted himself to "Thy will not mine", who cried out in agony from the cross : "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" Is it really honouring to these spiritual geniuses of the race, or most helpful to their struggling fellow-men, to put them on pedestals and worship them as Incarnations, as beings belonging to a totally different order from ordinary humanity ? "The Hindu

understands something of the real spirit of Christianity because he worships Jesus as veritable God", says our author. I wonder if this is real understanding either of Christianity or of Hinduism. Is 'incarnationism' the last word or the deepest insight of Hindu spirituality ?

The chapter on Christian missions discusses learnedly about the methods and psychology of conversion, but evades the crucial theme of the content of the Christian message, which gives sanction to the Christian missionary for all his activities, and which is still a stone of stumbling to many non-Christians. Even when this crucial theme is touched upon in a reference to Dr. Hogg's heart-searching work : *The Christian Message to the Hindu*, it is lightly dismissed with a story of the changing colours of the chameleon. The Christian claim to a sole and exclusive incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth needs far more serious treatment than this.

In these as in other parts of the book the motif of the writer seems to be to uphold the claims made for Sri Ramakrishna and the Vedanta Mission by fully granting the analogous claims made for Christ and Christianity by orthodox Christians. Thus the book is more an apology for the Ramakrishna Mission than a *Hindu View of Christ*. Nevertheless, it is a book full of ripe spiritual wisdom, and is a very sympathetic and at the same time critical study of certain trends of thought in Christianity. It is an eirenicon in the field of comparative study of religions, especially of Christianity as *Bhakti Marga*, and ought to call forth fuller studies in the same spirit.

S. K. George.

*India : A Synthesis of Cultures.* By KEWAL MOTWANI. Thacker & Co. Ltd., Bombay. 319 pp. Rs. 7-14-0.

Dr. Motwani, educated at Yale and the State University, Iowa, is well known as the author of many books on history and sociology. He toured thrice between 1933 and 1936 "the length and breadth of U. S. A. lecturing to sixty of her leading Universities and cultural organisations." The present book is an outcome of his lectures in America and India. The book is divided into five parts : I. Introduction, II. The Plan and Purpose of India's History, III. Foundations of Indian Culture, IV. India, a Conflict of Cultures, V. Planning Synthesis : Examples. Part III is the most substantial part of the book. In this he has brought into clear relief the fundamental values of Indian culture. He believes that the present industrial civilisation of the West with all its evils is the greatest menace to it and that if we fail to make a harmonious synthesis of the two we are likely to be

completely derailed. He has offered his own plan of synthesis in the last part of the book which is well thought out and deserves careful study.

The author has a contempt for "the academic, empirical techniques of western historians, indiscriminately applied by our countrymen to the study of our history." A real history according to him is one written on sociological lines and such a history of India has not been attempted yet. His own approach is sociological. He admits that a good deal of material is still buried underground and scattered all over the country. So the first duty of a student, whether sociologist or academic, is to unearth this material and bring together those which lie scattered before he can start quarrelling in regard to the method of interpretation. Certain mistakes of an empirical nature are found in the book and they may be rectified in the new edition. To mention only the more serious of them: p. 27 "Vikramaditya... gathered round himself at his Court at Ujjain a galaxy of Nine Gems, Navaratna." This is historically untrue. p. 79 Nagarjuna the alchemist did not live in 200 B. C. but more than a thousand years later. On p. 81 it is said that Charaka lived in the sixth century A. D. while on p. 27 it is stated that he lived in the time of the Kushan Emperor Kanishka. Both the statements cannot be true. p. 100 King Pasannanda should be Pasenadi which is the Pali form of the name of Prasenajit. p. 134 Aryadeva, the disciple of Nagarjuna must have lived earlier than the 4th century as Nagarjuna was a contemporary of Kanishka. The story of his connection with the Nalanda monastery is still a myth. p. 135 Fa-hien could not have lived in Nalanda as there was no Nalanda monastery in his times.

There are many other points here and there on which we may not agree with the author but there is no doubt that his is a very thought provoking study in so far as the present problems of our cultural crisis are concerned.

P. C. Bagchi.

*The Pageant of India's History*, Vol I. By Gertrude Emerson Sen. Longmans, Green and Co, New York, London & Toronto. 431 pp. \$ 4. 50.

The present volume which brings the history of India from the earliest times down to the time of Harsha contains also two chapters on 'Indian culture beyond the Seas' and 'Indian culture beyond the Mountains.' It is a neat, nicely printed, well illustrated, handy volume which presents the early history of India in its outline to the general reader. Besides giving an outline of political history it tries to give a complete picture of India with special reference to her activities in arts, and sciences. The

author is conversant with the latest researches in the field of Indian history and generally has adopted the most critically established views in regard to dates and facts. We may draw attention to a few inadvertences which are minor: pp. 115-116—The Greek colonies in the Punjab need not be called 'European'; p. 131—Asoka's dispatch of missionaries to Visvamsi, the king of the Huns is certainly not correct; p. 141—statements that the Puranas and the two great epics were revised and edited under the patronage of Pushyamitra are too bold; p. 161—it is not quite correct to say that Asvaghosa converted Kanishka; p. 162—it is wrong to say that the Pali Canon was translated into Sanskrit under Kanishka's orders; p. 174—there is nothing to prove that the Dravidian people spread over most of India in prehistoric times replacing the primitive inhabitants. In fact the author in other places also attaches little importance to the Pre-Dravidian tribes of India and shows little acquaintance with researches on the Pre-Dravidian problems. There is a preponderating Pre-Dravidian substratum in Dravidian itself.

In spite of these minor inaccuracies the book is a highly commendable work and can be safely recommended to all lovers of Indian history and culture.

P. C. Bagchi.

*Studies in Indo-British Economy Hundred Years Ago.* By N. C. SINHA.

A. Mukherjee & Co., 2 College Square, Calcutta. 1946. viii + 107 pp. Rs. 5-0-0.

A complete and comprehensive treatise on the economic history of India under the British rule has yet to be written. In fact, knowledge of this aspect of recent Indian history is full of important gaps which can be filled only with the results of patient research based on laborious hunting of old records. Sri N. C. Sinha has undertaken the task of bridging some of these gaps and shows promise in his book of fulfilling it admirably. This book, however, embodies, as the author admits, only the "framework for investigations under the Premchand Roychand Studentship of the Calcutta University" and by no means, pretends to be a complete treatise.

The book deals with the social and economic processes through which India was brought down from her 17th century status as the richest country in the world, to the rank of a poor and starving dependency of the British Crown. It is a sad and complicated story, one which is essentially connected with the expansion and growth of the nineteenth century imperialism in Great Britain. The economic and financial needs of the Industrial

Revolution in England provided the major motive to the rulers for destroying the handicraft and trades capitalism which characterised India in the 18th century. The ground was thus prepared on the one hand for the development of British colonies with the help of Indian labour, the so-called 'coolies' and their exploitation by British merchants, planters and capitalists, and, on the other, for the evolution of capitalist enterprise in India under British auspices.

The Charter Acts of 1813 and particularly of 1833 form the corner-stones of the new edifice which was thus built up. The Charter Act of 1833, the so-called charter of laissez-faire and liberalism, is dubbed by Sri Sinha as "a concrete expression of this ( British capitalistic ) bourgeois ideology". While the previous Charter ( 1813 ) did away with the trading monopoly of the East India Company and initiated a system of special license for private traders, the 1833 Charter bestowed on the British citizens full and unrestricted rights to trade and hold lands in India. From then on, the East India Company ceased to be a commercial body and British mercantile and industrial enterprise was freely allowed to enter and exploit the uncharted field in India and the East. Western capitalism thus raised abroad its own structure of inter-national economics which led to the drying up of native capital resources, the rise of the Indian bourgeoisie and a new class of wage-earners, in short, to the complete disintegration of the old economy in India. "Rural pauperisation" within the country reached such an acute stage that the Colonial masters found it both easy and cheap to recruit coolie labour from India for work in plantations and mines in the colonies. The process was completed with the emergence of a new social stratification in India.

Sri Sinha has analysed with a Marxist touch these processes, the developments that they led to, their repercussions within the country and outside and the play of economic forces in the background, in a manner which Dr. Radha Kamal Mukherjee in his introduction admits as not having been attempted by any other author. It is an authentic and well-documented book which amply compensates its literary short-comings ( it must be remembered that good history should also be good literature ) with the subtle and unorthodox analysis that it attempts. A solid mass of facts and information have been patiently collected, superbly analysed and "scientifically" interpreted. A thorough understanding of history and its forces both internal and inter-national, is revealed in the pages of this book which is full of interest for all students of economic history *vis-a-vis* western capitalism.

J. P. Bhattacharjee.

*Eyes of Light ( Poems )*. By DILIP KUMAR ROY. Nalanda Publications, Dhan Nur Building, Sir Pherozezshah Mehta Road, Bombay. 148. pp Rs. 4-0-0.

Indian writers of English poems attract very few readers abroad as well as in India, more so when these are 'unendowed with the flesh and blood of actual life' and sing of experiences which are super-normal. The author of the present volume, himself an eminent Bengali literateur and a finished writer of English language, had the good fortune of 'being initiated into the profundities of English Verse' by no less a person than Sri Aurobindo who even encouraged his disciple by translating a couple of his Bengali poems into English. Even then Sri K. G. Srinivasa Iyengar in his illuminating foreward, and the author in his preface, have given vent to their feeling of apprehension as to the nature of the response this volume may have in India and abroad. But they hope that the 'mind of the future will be more international, and the expression of various temperaments in English poetry will then have a chance'.

Most of the poems of this volume are written originally in English, some are adapted from the author's own Bengali originals, some more are translations from other poets. Much of this poetry is mystic, deriving inspiration from Yoga. The poet prays to be initiated in the 'occult lore' and sing 'to a nameless rhythm of some Mystic Rose.' He is conscious of his imperfections, nor does he claim to have reached that stage of 'exalted mood which is essentially given and not fabricated'. But his effort is marked with a steady progress and his 'lispig the Mystic Message with impotent and juvenile lips' steadily acquires the authentic chime while his 'hunt for truer ring—a brighter phrase' ever continues.

The poet is inspired by the 'fire-winged melody' of some Mystic Beauty which makes 'beauty known to this earth' pale into insignificance. *Eyes of Light* can only probe into the mystery of that Beauty while the light of these worldly eyes fail miserably. But a Yogic poet even when his 'life's borders crumble down and join Infinity' does not altogether ignore earth-born beauty, his life's crumbling borders do not exclude the charm that feasts the earthly eyes and ears. This is evident from the fact that the poet of the present volume in his similes and other poetic figures, draws largely from the world around him and some of the poems can assume a symbolic significance only when read with reference to other poems that precede and follow them.

The poet's mastery over the English language cannot be disputed ; the music and symbolism which are the soul of these poems are almost perfect

and the choice of words specially in the renderings from the *Bhagavata* lends something like an epic grace to the poems.

The author's note on the prosody of these poems at the end of the book is very helpful to the readers.

Amiyakumar

*Light of Asia and the Indian Song of Songs ( Gita Govinda )*. Translated from the Sanskrit by SIR EDWIN ARNOLD. With an Explanatory Introduction to the Philosophy of Buddhism by K. D. Sethna. 229 pp. Rs. 1-8-0.

*The Panchatantra*. Translated from the Sanskrit by ARTHUR W. RADER. 403 pp. Rs. 1-8-0. Both available from Jaico Publishing House, 125 Bell Lane, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay.

Sir Edwin Arnold ( 1852-1904 ), Newdigate Prize-winner, Principal, Deccan College, Poona and later a fellow of Bombay University, occupied a distinguished place among those occidentals who felt a call to interpret the culture of India in a form acceptable to the common reader across the seas. The popularity and esteem in which his *Light of Asia*, *Song Celestial* and other works are still held, are a tribute to one who was inspired by an abiding desire to aid in the better mutual knowledge of East and West. Arnold was not wrong in hoping that these books 'will preserve the memory of one who loved India and the Indian peoples.' Leading Indians including Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru have paid their respects and expressed their gratitude to this illustrious interpreter of the heritage of India.

The publishers, who claim 'to bring to you world-famous classics—the great works of literature which you have always wanted to read—and own,' have offered in the present handy, one-volume edition both *The Light of Asia* and *The Indian Song of Songs*. It is however a mistake to describe the first as a translation from the original Sanskrit, and, their assertion that they have appended "an extensive glossary of Sanskrit words used in the text of the two poems" is not wholly warrantable. The glossary is not only incomplete but also poor and one misses the diacritical marks and other aids to correct pronunciation of the original Sanskrit words.

In *The Light of Asia* Arnold sought, in his words, "to depict the life and character and indicate the philosophy of that noble hero and reformer, Prince Gautama of India, the founder of Buddhism, by the medium of an imaginary Buddhist votary." The life and character of the Prince of Peace is delineated with meticulous care albeit along conventional lines; and,



although differences of opinion may exist as to the 'historicity' of Arnold's hero, it cannot be gainsaid that he has given us the core and essence of the Buddha's personality. His exposition of the tenets and teachings of the Buddha, however, may not always pass muster of 'mathematical' critics. It is good, therefore, that the publishers have included in the opening pages of this volume a learned essay by Mr. K. D. Sethna, 'an ardent disciple of Sri Aurobindo, and a poet and writer of great merit', on the philosophy of Buddhism "as a complementary adjunct to the study of *The Light of Asia*" as a whole, and its Eighth Book, in particular.

Arnold's second work in the volume is a translation ( he calls it paraphrase ) of Jayadeva's famous Sanskrit idyll *Gita Govinda*. The English title, *The Indian Song of Songs* was a very happy and appropriate choice. The Old Testament counterpart has the same quality of mystic allegory and rapturous flight of lyricism as the Indian one.

Nobody was better qualified than Arnold to present 'this imitation of Jaydeva,' his second effort to popularize Indian classics. He wields the facile pen of a true-born poet himself. By varying the metre most adroitly, he has given us an 'imitation' not merely of the content but of the form, as well. As one goes through the English rendering one feels almost transported to a bygone age of romance. What panorama of pictures—the dark sky, the rain-laden clouds deepening, the fragrant breeze, the serpentine path lit up by an occasional lightning-flash, the Jamuna in spate, the hesitant steps of love-laden Radha, the eternal love-call of Krishna's flute, the hope of secret union and the despair of a broken tryst and the ultimate consummation of their hearts' desire—all flash before the mind's eye, as in a procession.

In his illuminating preface, Arnold has tried to delve into those 'earnest and profound meanings' of *Gita Govinda*, which according to him are no less significant than its 'ardent love-pictures.' The philosophy of the 'Song of Govinda' has interested him as much as the antique melodies of Jayadeva, and, although much of his observations on Indian music are now outdated, he evinces keen interest in the subject. His remark that 'Indian music well merits professional study' is as true now as then.

*The Panchatantra* is a very commendable reprint of the well-known American oriental scholar Mr. Ryder's translation of the world-famous Sanskrit stories, first published in America more than twenty years ago and long out of print.

*The Panchatantra* needs no introduction to the educated world as a text-book on "the wise conduct of life." The English translation is evidently meant for the readers who have no access to the original Sanskrit.

The present edition opens with three brief introductory essays, that of the author himself being the most illuminating. There are five parts in the whole volume, as in the original.

The author holds a facile pen and the gems of the Sanskrit have been excellently done into English. The style is simple, idiomatic, good and effective and the stories have been almost as fascinatingly told as in the original. Besides, the author has very cleverly rendered into English verse the Sanskrit verses without impairing the sense to an extent that matters.

Perhaps the only strong exception that could, with a good ground, be taken to Mr. Ryder's work is his translation of the proper names whether they belong to human beings or animals. A reader, if he is acquainted with the original text, is apt to get bewildered by such expressions as "a king named Fine Chariot," or a "Brahmin whose name was Sacrifice," and the like. Not that the author has everywhere succeeded in offering a translation of a proper name but he has expended undue energy in finding one. The best course for him would have been to use the original Sanskrit names with their translations supplied either at the end or with the text.

Printed in the U. S. A., these two attractive books live up to the publisher's claim: "Of handy size and handsomely printed, set in an especially easy-to-read type, Jaico Books provide the best in reading values, at a price within the reach of all."

S. N. Ghoshal

*Philosophy of Nature.* By MORITZ SCHLICK. Philosophical Library, New York. 136 pp \$ 3. 00.

Moritz Schlick, who died in 1936, was one of the founders of the famous Vienna Circle of logical positivists. He began his academic career as a physicist but then turned to philosophy like many other philosophers of our time.

The particular type of philosophy he worked on and advocated was one that is engaged with clarification of the methods and results of science, and which is critical and corrective of speculative philosophy. The present volume consists of a philosophy of physics and a short enquiry into the relation of physics and biology. The former is a reproduction of a handwritten manuscript left by Schlick and the latter of some of his class notes.

Though the essays are very brief and sometimes scrappy they are marked by precision and profundity. Philosophy for Schlick should be directed to elucidation of the meaning of science and the author attempts to break ground of such a scientific philosophy. He shows how the new

us with a message of faith in the eternal values of things, above the petty barriers of caste, colour or creed.

The modern world is utterly unbalanced. It commands immense material resources and organises untamed natural forces but misses that which enriches its inner life. It is a sadly war-torn world we live in with perpetual war-clouds hovering overhead. It is in such a setting that Swami Sivananda brings to us words of wisdom and comfort.

Swamiji's philosophy reveals the under-flowing stream of India's spiritual aspirations. His analysis and conclusions are truths lived by him and truths realised. In order to attain to his full human stature man must seek the vitalising force of the spirit. His ethical codes and social or political organisations are lifeless and ineffective so long as he does not link them with lasting and abiding truths of the mystics. Swamiji is essentially realistic inasmuch as he believes in facing all the practical problems of life and in solving them fully. His teachings comprehend the diverse aspects of life and society and infuse them with the life-breath of spirituality. The theory and practice of spirituality are in harmony in his case, as, he only is a true sadhaka who teaches only because he lives the truths proclaimed.

I commend this book to all, more especially to our young folk who who have a truer seeking but unfortunately no means to satisfy it.

Sivanath.

*Origin and Spread of the Tamils.* By V. R. RAMACHANDRA DIKSITAR.  
The Adyar Library, Madras. 1947. VI + 110 pp. Rs. 3-8-0.

The above book is a course of two lectures delivered under the terms of the Sankara-Parvati Endowment, University of Madras, November, 1940. The lecturer, Mr. V. R. Ramachandra Diksitar of the Madras University has done well by choosing for his lectures the above subject, which is, though, controversial, yet important. The author has ably examined all the prevalent opinions in regard to the original home of the Tamils, and shown their hollowness. The most important of all is that Dravidians were a section of the great Mediterranean race, and migrated to India before the so-called Aryan invation. The first lecture deals with the problem of fixing the home of Dravidians in South India which the author has tried to prove definitely from the latest archaeological finds. Once the home is settled indisputably every other thing, viz. the direction of cultural influence could easily be explained. It would be much better if the lecturer pauses to see whether the traditional folklore of the Mediterranean countries, could also clinch his thesis. The second lecture deals extensively with Dravidian

cultural influences abroad in such countries as Egypt, Mesopotamia, Babylonia etc. The notes added at the end will enable the reader to have fuller information on the subject.

We must congratulate the author of these lectures on the commendable manner in which he has challenged the theory of Mediterranean origin of Dravidians. The printing and get-up of the book are excellent.

N. As.

*Descriptive Catalogue of the Pa'i Manuscripts in the Adyar Library* By E. W. ADIKARAM. Adyar Library, Madras 1947. XXXI+111 pp. Rs. 6-0-0.

The Adyar Library contains a number of Pali palm-leaf manuscripts in Sinhalese and other scripts. Many unsuccessful attempts were made so far to catalogue them descriptively. Now, Rev. Adikaram has succeeded in preparing the desired catalogue. The collection of Pa'i MSS. donated by Mrs. Illangakoon, a wealthy Buddhist lady of Ceylon contains almost all the texts of Pali Tripitaka with commentaries. Though all the texts are critically edited by European scholars, yet these MSS. will be highly useful for preparing critical Devanagari editions of these texts with commentaries, which, I hope, the Adyar Library will undertake soon. The catalogue is also furnished with two Appendices, one being a list of printed Pali books (Post-Canonical) and the other of the printed Buddhist books in Sanskrit.

We must thank the authorities of the Library for the scholarly service rendered by undertaking this publication.

N. As.

*Inflation and the Way Out.* A Symposium. By S. K. MURANJAN, L. N. WELINGKAR, M. L. DANTWALA and P. A. WADIA. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 1948. 36 Pp. Rs. -12-0.

The booklet is a collection of four lectures on "Inflation—its causes and cures" delivered by the four economists of Bombay. The lectures were organised by the Labour College, an institution sponsored by the Socialist Party, Bombay to "create a new type of trade union worker." The temptation to search for a definite political 'colour or bias' in the treatment of the subject is therefore natural.

But it must be admitted that such political colouring can now-a-days scarcely be avoided. What with the failures of the Government and what with the play of class interests, inflation and particularly its remedy have become more and more a political controversy in which the labour's case

usually goes unnoticed. It is pleasing therefore to find in a book the common man's—the poor man's— point of view presented in a popular way but with all the force of a sound economic analysis. Not often do the average people read or hear about the practicability of combating inflation in India by increasing output. Dr. Muranjan calls such an expectation "sheer moonshine", in view of the inadequacy and obsolescence of our Capital equipment. The effects of inflation on production, distribution, rural economy as well as the remedies are discussed respectively by the four professors sufficiently popularly to make the analysis intelligible to the lay man.

J. P. Bhattacharjee.

*Statistics.* By Y. D. KESKAR. Vora & Co., Publishers Ltd., Bombay. 1948. 461 Pp. Rs. 10-8-0.

Primarily meant for students of Indian Universities, this elementary treatise is also designed to create interest in youngmen and "assist them in a more general use of statistical methods in various spheres of life." Written in text-book style, the book is non-mathematical in treatment. It may no doubt be called a commendable venture on the part of Principal Keskar to attract young students towards statistics and initiate them in the elementary methods. But the danger inherent in divorcing mathematics from statistics should not be overlooked. It may lead to the tendency of statistics being looked upon as "too easy" a tool by those who are not properly trained and equipped. As an elementary treatise, however, the book is expected to serve its purpose very well. The concluding chapter on Statistical Material in India adds to its value as a textbook.

J P. Bhattacharjee.

*Cent per Cent Swadeshi or The Economics of Village Industries.* By M. K. GANDHI. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 130 pp. Price Rs. 2-0-0.

This is the third edition of the collection of Gandhiji's writings on the subject of "economic organisation of human society, or the principles of Swadeshi as he shortly termed it." The publishers have very commendably revised the edition to bring it uptodate. The re-arrangement of the articles according to the subject matter, which is another feature of the edition, will make it easier for all readers to handle this book which, inspite of its small size, is the most important source of reference for all planners for peace.

J. P. Bhattacharjee.

*New Frontiers of Psychology.* By NICHOLAS DEVORE. Philosophical Library, New York. 137 Pp. \$ 3.00.

As one goes through these pages, one is convinced that the author's studies have been "prompted by a love for people and a sympathy for those who suffer". To-day most men and women are mentally sick. Only a correct approach to the various problems of our days by psychology can guide the millions to the hall of happiness. Only a new psychology with new frontiers can teach man to govern himself and the world around him and thus save civilisation from utter ruin. Psychology, Astronomy, Physics and Biology—none of these sciences is complete by itself. To think that the sciences are mutually exclusive and segregated in watertight compartments, is to misread nature. There are various facts in Psychology which can be explained only with the help of Physics, Biology and Astronomy. So far, we agree with the author. But one would hesitate to accept such conclusions of the author as "Psychical energy can probably be proved and demonstrated in physical terms" or "reasoned thinking does not take place within the brain at all, but in a magnetic field not only outside of the brain but outside of the skull". Whether the reader agrees with the author's theory of Cosmic Conditioning or not, he cannot but admit that most of the chapters of the book are thought-provoking.

Benoy G. Ray.

*The Problems of Philosophy.* By SATIS CHANDRA CHATTERJEE. Das Gupta & Co. Ltd., Calcutta. Rs. 6-8-0.

Dr. Satis Chandra Chatterjee is well known as a lucid writer on philosophical subjects. As a successful teacher he knows well where and when the students of philosophy need help so far as explanation and critical appreciation of knotty philosophical problems are concerned. That he has been eminently successful in meeting their demand for a suitable textbook will be evidenced if one cares to go through the pages of *The Problems of Philosophy*. We feel sure, the book will amply serve the needs of both graduate and post-graduate studies in Philosophy of our Universities. Certain persistent but perplexing problems have been studied from a critical and comparative point of view. Western standpoint has been balanced with Indian standpoint and the conclusions of the author are results of scholarly analysis and insight. The problem of aesthetic and moral values is also a complex one and it would have been fair, had the author devoted one or two chapters to it.

The get up, printing and paper are good.

Benoy G. Ray

*Mynah of the Zoo and other Essays.* BY J. VIJAYATUNGA. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 98. Pp. Price Rs. 3-12-0.

This is a charming collection of some 'familiar essays'. An essay worth the name has been described as 'a lyric in prose'. Judged from that stand-point, the essays of the present volume will very often stand the test of true literature. The author has a gift of expressing experience and fantasy in a very intimate way which endears him to readers. The range of his experience is also very wide, his philosophical reflections are thought provoking and his literary appreciation is expressive of the catholicity of his mind. His sense of humour is keen—he glances at things with a running conceit and never insists on any. He wields the English language with complete ease but his mind is that of an unorthodox oriental.

Amiyakumar.

*And So We March.* By SHIVA PRASAD CHAUDHURY. Jubilee Press, 14 Chandra Sur Lane, Calcutta 6. 160 Pp. Rs. 3-0-0.

The author traces with a bold but discriminating hand the history of India since her freedom. He describes the tremendous difficulties which the national government had to face and shows how they are being overcome one by one through sagacity, patience and goodwill. The book reveals the power and enthusiasm of free India, her spirit of love and honour, and her inherent genius and foresight. The author shows considerable grasp of details and a fine marshalling of facts and figures. He has a lucid but warm style.

P. J. Chaudhury.

*Bodily Reactions and Examination of Systems of Therapeutics.* By K. L. DAFTARI. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. 235 pp. Rs 5-8-0.

In this book the author has examined the practice of Therapy in different fields of medicine. He has particularly dealt with the treatment of symptoms and diseases through Hydropathy and Electropathy. With very simple recipes of Homeopathy the author claims to have been able successfully to treat a large number of cases including some of the more serious ones.

The book is handy and specially for the common man it will be found helpful as a guide to treatment of common diseases by simple Homeopathic medicines. People interested in Nature Cure will find encouraging references

in the book as to how to treat cases with the help of Water and Electricity. The learned doctor has also suggested how in these hard days of depression, health units can be developed all over the countryside along simple economic lines.

R. G.

*Padartha-Vidya* ( in Bengali ) *Physical Science*. By KRISHNAPADA GHOSE and SUDHANGSFUKUMAR MAITRA. Ghose & Co., 12/1 Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta . 12. 504 pp. Rs. 6-0-0.

This is a Bengali edition of an English work by the first author. It is meant for Intermediate students. The treatment is throughout excellent but the Bengali terminology has not been uniformly happy. Yet the attempt is bold and praiseworthy. We recommend the book to the students.

P. J. Chaudhury.

*Visvarahasye Newton O Einstein* ( in Bengali ), Newton and Einstein's Discovery of the Mysterious Universe—By MOHAMMAD ABDUL JABBAR. The Malik Library, 73 Luxmibazar, Dacca. 150 Pp. Rs. 2-4-0.

This is a praiseworthy attempt on the part of the author to offer a popular exposition in Bengali of the works of Newton and Einstein. But his success in the book has not been uniform. As against some very lucid pages there are many obscure portions that appear abstract and verbose. Einstein's criticism of absolute simultaneity at cosmic distances, which is the cornerstone of his theory, has not been clarified, and, without this all the scientific and philosophical consequences of his theory ( as stated by the author ) lose their rationale. Einstein's positivistic bend of time which led him to seek operational definitions of many physical concepts should have been stressed. The author has accepted without criticism the blend of space and time required by Relativity Physics as a philosophical truth. The discrepancy between commonsense notions of space and time and the purely mathematical construction should have been pointed out and the epistemological difficulties of Relativity exposed. We hope the author will improve this work in later editions.

P. J. Chaudhury.



## BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

- Selected Letters I.* By M. K. GANDHI. Chosen and Tr. by Valji Govindji Desai. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 56 pp. 0-7-0.
- Gleanings Gathered at Bapu's Feet.* By MIRA. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 26 pp. 0-6-0.
- For Pacifists.* By M. K. GANDHI. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 106 pp. Rs. 1-4-0.
- Education for All Within Six Months.* By H. G. S. BIVAR. Pub. by R. C. Sur at Rabindra Publishing House, 50 Pataldanga St., Calcutta. 41 pp. Re. 1-0-0.
- Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar.* By RAJENDRA PRASAD. Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261-263 Hornby Road, Bombay. 132 pp. Rs. 2-0-0.
- Vedic Culture.* By GANGA PRASAD UPADHYAYA. Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Delhi. 216 pp. Rs. 3-8-0.
- The Atom Bomb and Other Poems, Pts. I and II.* By K. S. RAMA, Dept. of English, Hindu College, Guntur ( S. India ).
- Non-violence in Peace & War, Vol. II.* By M. K. GANDHI. Navajivan Karyalaya, Post Box 105, Khajurini Pole, Kalupur, Ahmedabad. 403 pp. Rs. 5-0-0.
- Noble Lives.* By NAGENDRANATH GUPTA. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay, 261-263 Hornby Road—Post Box 1266. 211 pp. Rs. 2-8-0.
- Forgotten Religions.* A Symposium. Ed. VERGILIUS FERM. Philosophical Library, New York. XI+392 pp. \$ 7. 50.
- The Mahavastu, Vol. I.* Tr. from the Buddhist Sanskrit by J. J. JONES. Luzac & Co. Ltd., 46 Great Russell Street, London, W. C. 1. XX+324 pp. 20 shillings.
- Some Topics from Ancient Indian History.* By RADHAKRISHNA CHOUHURY. Readers Friend, Bankipore, Patna. 43 pp. Rs. 0-12-0.
- Conversations of Gandhiji.* By CHANDRASHANKER SUKLA. Vora & Co., Publishers, Ltd., Bombay 2. VIII+134 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.

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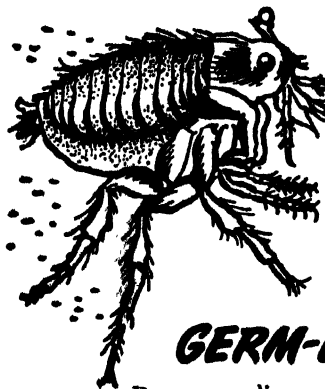
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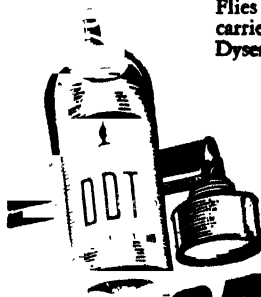
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PILGRIMS  
By Gaganendranath Tagore

Country - Annapurna Ghosh

## THE YEAR-END

*By* RABINDRANATH TAGORE

North-East the heaped clouds rise and fierce from afar  
they approach, without bar,  
the bamboo-groves their dark-blue shadows cast,  
gigantic, vast,  
the day is done. March draws to a close,  
the year ends, darkness descends,  
my heart longs to sing the old year's song as it fails  
in dying wails.

Slow walks the peasant, the cows affrighted run  
in the fields dry and dun.  
On the river, the boats, their sails folded,  
quickly draw nigh the shore ;  
on the west the scattered clouds grow dark and advance  
with angry glance ;  
the frightened birds fly in flocks as the lightning fierce  
the sky's void pierce.

Strike hard the lyre, oh ! strike till in high sound  
we hear it resound,  
by the heart's cruel stroke its strong notes tumultuous  
let rise without disguise,

Translated by Lotika Ghose from the original Bengali poem *Varshasekh* (বর্ষশেখ).  
Edward Thompson describes *The Year's End* to be one of the greatest poems of *Kalpana*  
(1900). "In *The Year's End*", Thompson writes, "he says good-bye to the tired year  
and his own old self. . . . The Bengali year ends in our April, as the hot weather begins to  
grow to its fulness ; and it usually closes with a brief spell of stormy weather. . . . A  
footnote tells us that the *Year's End* was written on a day of tempest, in 1898".



song-driven sing full-throated soaring upward,  
    boundless skyward ;  
let the yellow leaves discoloured, ribbed and dry,  
    fly with long sigh.

Dolour and joy mingling in pleasure and pain  
    thunderous insane ;  
let mad April storms their ringing anklets wear,  
    dance and dare,  
step in high rhythm. Struck by the storm's sweep die,  
    vanish and fly,  
like dust, like dry grass, the old year's fruitless store,  
    life's used-up lore.

Wide-open the gates of my being, storm and rain  
    let come insane ;  
blow as on a conch-shell on my heart  
    until it start,  
penetrate with victorious call auspicious, high,  
    the canopied sky,  
in the awakened heart awaking strong to endure  
    contentment pure.

The Vedic anthem holy, the seed-word deep,  
    simple let leap,  
from my heart in a moment undivided, sole,  
    of all the whole,  
in it of repentance and sin, of pain and joy,  
    no fearful alloy,  
in it alone bathed baptised life's free  
    victorious key.

Oh ! New, oh ! you that are whole, the sky fulfilling,  
    with fleecy clouds filling,

layer on layer stretching, all you steep  
                    in dark dense heap,  
from whence do you come to curtain, cover,  
                    the horizon over,  
calm, terrible, black, with your dark pall  
                    for a while cover all.

Your sign, as under deep frown, the lightning darts,  
                    of a sudden starts,  
your song in storm-winds bursts from your skyey flute,  
                    sonorous to salute,  
your rain penetrating thirst issues keen,  
                    from some high serene,  
your peace dormant in verdure ushers night  
                    blind to sight.

You come not now rocked in spring's tranced bliss  
                    the flowers to kiss,  
you come not now the murmurous glade to view ;  
                    how great are you !  
You come your chariot-wheels rumbling loud,  
                    kingly proud,  
your seed-word of thunder, known, unknown,  
                    to pronounce, victorious announce.

O Untameable ! O Sure ! O New ! O cruel New !  
                    you come to renew,  
as from withered petals destroying all, comes the fruit  
                    to transmute,  
the old abode, tearing in wondrous wise  
                    to surprise,  
so as strong in power you rise full in view  
                    I bow to you.

I bow to you O Serene ! O Verdant ! O Untameable !  
                    tireless Unblameable,  
O great warrior new-born, of what you bring  
                    you know not a thing,  
unfurled your banner piercing the mist, the sun's ray  
                    splendid you display,  
with hands folded upward I gaze, not knowing in it  
                    what meaning is writ.

O Hero ! smiling strong as your bow you draw,  
                    the heart's very core  
it enters with its noisy twang, till its echo dwell  
                    in each quivering cell.  
O Youth ! from your high trumpet blow your call  
                    summoning all,  
till in answer we stand, till running we come to render  
                    our lives surrender.

Our eyes fixed forward, no cry, no tie, no call,  
                    shall we recall,  
O traveller impetuous, we shall not reck for time,  
                    no reason nor rhyme  
shall be ours, as foaming death brimful we drain,  
                    intoxicated, insane,  
life's worn-out thousand oppressions cast away  
                    without delay.

Day after day ignobly to live, not dare,  
                    our shame's burden bear,  
night after night in close room the taper's gleam,  
                    dying, to redeem,  
fractions to divide, profit and loss to count,  
                    interest and discount,  
unbearable to hack and hew, each moment's waste  
                    dark death's foretaste.

Where a million worlds in silence pass on the roadside  
with no pride,  
let me sit ; of the ages watch the mighty face,  
pageant and trace ;  
like an eagle bear me aloft, tear me away,  
from dug mud and clay,  
with great Death place me face to face in keen light  
of the lightning bright

And then shatter me to bits, throw, take  
my wings and break,  
cast me where you cast the dead leaves, the boughs torn,  
the flowers outworn,  
a moment's plaything, your cruel robbery's store  
of what is no more,  
let me lie in that lethean land, eternal, dark,  
with no flash nor spark.

In the sprouting sugar-cane fields the rain is beating,  
its song repeating,  
from darkness to darkness fleeing day in a shroud  
is wrapt in cloud,  
in the waning storm the cicadas sing, wet earth  
breathes of new birth,  
at my window my off'ring the year's last song I intone,  
'neath the night-sky lone.

## THE SURAT ADVENTURE OF NIL LOHIT

By PRAMATHA CHAUDHURI

A LONG TIME AGO I promised to write a story for the Pujah issue of the *Basumati*. Various things have kept me so busy that I have not been able to put my hand to writing.

So when I woke up this morning I made up my mind to finish a story before sundown, no matter what happened.

When I took up my pen I found my head empty of everything except—Congress! And I can only read stories about Congress, not write them, for I have never been to Delhi.

In the circumstances it was impossible to produce a story out of my own head, so I decided to write one that I had heard,—one which may not be known to others.

I heard this story from Nil Lohit. You know, of course, who Nil Lohit is. Last year about this time I gave particulars concerning him in the monthly *Basumati*. Some amongst your readers may remember him.

A distinguished déclassé Kshatriya friend of mine tried to prove to me one day that the existing Vedas are a forgery and that the Brahmins have perpetrated the fraud. His theory was that when the original Vedas were submerged in the waters of the Flood, the initial characters were effaced. This irrefutable assertion excited my uncontrollable laughter. My friend took on the aspect of an infuriated Kshatriya and informed me with warmth that, being a Brahmin, I, along with all other Brahmins, inhabited a world created by Brahma and therefore could not understand him, for he lived in the world of Visvamitra. The idea stunned me at first. When I thought it over, I found it was true. The mind of each of us dwells in a different world; only our physical bodies inhabit a common earth. I live in the

world of reality and Nil Lohit lives in a realm of his fancy. Put plainly, I live in British India and Nil Lohit lives in the world of the imagination. A story of Nil Lohit's from my lips must necessarily be to the hearers like a drink of buttermilk when one wants milk.

The Surat Congress had just broken up. There was no other topic of conversation in Calcutta. Wherever people gathered, opinions were exchanged and much speculation took place as to why and how the Congress broke up, whether the shoe that fell at the feet of the President was a foreign pump, a Punjabi *nagra*, a Marathi *chati* or a Madras *chappal*.

We were talking about it one day, busily trying to determine the kind and nature of that epoch-making footwear, when Nil Lohit suddenly declared that he had been present at Surat and that he alone knew the secret of the shoe. The only other person who knew it would never reveal it, even on pain of death. We were all eager to hear the account of an eye-witness, though we knew that account would bear little relation to the truth. Nil Lohit said, "If you stop arguing, I'll tell you the story." We all fell silent at once. He began with a description of his journey to Surat. Recorded word for word the story would be a novel, so I'll give only the substance as briefly as I can ; that is, I'll serve the bones of the fish without the flesh.

Nil Lohit went to Surat by a B. N. R. passenger train, that is to say, quite alone ; so no other delegate from Bengal met him. The train dawdled along and arrived at Surat on the evening of the sixth day. Getting down at the station, Nil Lohit hired a tonga and started for the Congress camp. In Gujerat the tonga is a sort of bullock-cart, but the bullocks are much stronger and more spirited than our Bengali horses. They trot along just like mettlesome horses and the gongs suspended from their necks ring out like church-bells, playing do, re, mi, fa. They keep time like the anklets of a dancing-girl. During the six days in the train Nil Lohit had to all intents and purposes fasted. A glass of new milk in the morning and a handful of green gram

at night was all that he had been able to procure in the way of food. Of course *laddūs* were to be had at the stations, but they were like marbles ; it was impossible to break them with teeth. They required to be swallowed whole and for that purpose an oesophagus like a drain-pipe was required. And *puri* ?—If one of those had been hurled at the President, he would never have recovered. No shoe in the world can compare with them in hardness and shape. They are like wooden clogs. But though he was nearly dying of hunger and thirst, Nil Lohit forgot this completely in the sights of Surat's main street. Lotuses put out their heads at the windows on both sides of the road as he advanced. The ladies of Gujerat do not hide themselves behind the veil and it would be difficult to find beauties equal to them even in paradise. The sight of them fascinated him. A Juliet seemed to be standing at every windowed balcony and he was the Romeo. But the tonga proceeded at such a pace that he got no opportunity of whispering to anyone those lines about killing the envious moon. He recalled that at one place where the tonga halted briefly, processions of beautiful women passed to the right and left of him. The only reason he did not fall desperately in love with one of them on the spot, was that he could not make up his mind which to choose. Marriages can, of course, be contracted with two or three hundred at a time, but it is possible to fall in love with only one—at least only one at a time. Though his heart was so full, his stomach was, on the other hand, empty. Such was the condition in which Nil Lohit arrived at the Congress camp. His intoxication with beauty was quickly dispelled. The purchase of a ticket nearly emptied his purse and then he was told there was no room for him. "Not an inch of room," was the answer he met with everywhere. He had not slept for six nights nor had he taken rice for six days. To wander about the streets of Surat all night on top of that meant certain death. Nil Lohit found himself in deep water and could not think of a way out. Observing his plight the sympathetic tonga-driver suggested that he go to the Extremists' camp.

Nil Lohit's pulse began to beat again and the tonga returned by the way it had come. This time the windows of the houses did not draw his eyes, even though there was an evening star shining in each. He was unreasonably angry with the beauties of Surat ; it was as though they were preventing him from finding a place in the Congress camp. It was eight o' clock at night when he at last reached the camp of the Maharashtrians. He paid off the tonga driver with his remaining money. The Maharashtrian camp was so crowded that the idea of spending the night there did not appeal to him. It was a Black Hole with fifty or sixty strong men to each small room. "At least," he hoped, "I'll get something to eat, even if I don't find sleeping accommodation." So he decided to stay. The sight of the preparations being made for the meal, however, horrified him. Wherever he looked he saw chillies, chillies, and more chillies ! Chillies were being peeled, ground, pulped, sliced. His mouth began to burn at the smell of them. He gulped and promised himself to eat only salt with his rice. But he was not fated to have any rice that day. There was no place for him in this camp either. They concluded he was a spy. His hopes were thus destroyed, primarily because he was unknown and secondarily because he had no luggage at all with him. He had, in fact, simply dashed out of the house as he was, to prove to the people of Surat that he was a sannyasin intoxicated with patriotism.

When Nil Lohit left the Maharashtra camp, it was ten o'clock at night. He had an empty stomach, an empty purse and not a single acquaintance in Surat. He found himself a second Robinson Crusoe in the midst of civilisation. All that was needed to rouse Nil Lohit's strength of mind was a serious difficulty. In ordinary circumstances he was like other ordinary people. But in trouble he became a superman, that which in Sanskrit is called *atimanush*, more than man. As he emerged into the street, a supernatural strength and courage entered into him. He persuaded himself that he was on hunger-strike against the injustices of civilised society. His hunger and thirst immediately



disappeared. He decided to extricate himself from the difficulty he was in by sheer strength of will. All Congressmen without distinction fell proportionately in his estimation. Whatever they did, they did together, clinging to each other; not one of them had the strength to do anything alone. "Trudge on alone !" shouted Nil Lohit and plunged into the moonless darkness. He turned off the main street and made his way into the by-lanes. They were awash with darkness and the doors and windows of the houses were as hermetically sealed as those of jails. They were deserted and silent, hushed as though the whole city of Surat lay swooning in the night. Here and there a faint light gleamed in a doorway. But wherever there was a light, there was also the sound of weeping. For at that time an epidemic of plague was raging in the town. To enter this city of the dead would have made anyone but Nil Lohit faint with fear. But after swimming about in the darkness for several hours, he touched bottom. He found himself in front of a house whose upper storey was brilliantly illuminated by many lamps and from which floated the deliciously sweet song of a woman. Unhesitatingly Nil Lohit unwound his turban, threw an end over the railing of the balcony and climbed up. At the sound of his feet a woman as beautiful as a denizen of heaven emerged from the room. They stared at each other in astonishment. Nil Lohit had never in his life seen or imagined such beauty. To him she seemed the epitome of all the beautiful women in Surat. Her whole person sparkled with gems. Nil Lohit's eyes were so dazzled he dropped them to the floor. The woman spoke first. "Who are you ?" she asked in Hindi.

"A Bengali," answered Nil Lohit.

"Why have you come to Surat ?"

"I am a Congress delegate."

"Why have you come here instead of going to the Congress camp ?"

"I've lost my way."

"Any tonga-driver could have taken you to the right place."

"My suitcase and bedding got lost at the station. My money was in my suitcase I set out walking because I did not have the means to hire a tonga. I've arrived here after wandering about for three or four hours."

"Why have you entered this house?"

"I saw the lights and heard the music."

"Didn't you feel any compunction about entering a strange house without so much as a by-your-leave?"

"A drowning person clutches at whatever comes to hand. I am almost dead of hunger. I entered here to see if I could get something to eat. There was no time to stop and consider whose house it was. From the lights I knew it was someone well-to-do and from the music I knew there was no plague here."

The woman took pity on him. Leading him into the room, she made him sit down. Summoning her maids, she bade them bring food. At that Nil Lohit revived. He took the room in at a glance. A Kashmiri carpet covered the floor and musical instruments lay about. He asked the lady of the house who she was. She replied with a smile:

"I am what you want to be."

"That is to say?"

"I am independent."

The maids reappeared with great silver trays of fruits and sweetmeats. Nil Lohit sat down to eat. To describe that meal would require two thick catalogues, one of fruits and one of sweets. In brief, the fruits of all the Indian seasons and sweets from all the Indian provinces were placed in heaps before him. He set about assuaging his week-old hunger. He could have eaten more than Kumbhakarna himself that day. When his meal was almost over, there came a soft knock at the door. The lady of the house sent a maid downstairs to open it. After a moment a gentleman appeared. On seeing him Nil Lohit perceived he must be some important personage from near Bombay. And his wealth was evident in his waist-line. The gentleman was taken aback by the presence of Nil Lohit. A long conversation

took place in Gujerati between the gentleman and the lady of the house. At the end of it the gentleman addressed Nil Lohit in most ungentlemanly Hindi and told him that after his meal he was to leave the house immediately, or he would be handed over to the police. The lady protested. She said that if the young Bengali wandered about the streets all night, he would surely die of the plague. And it was evident from his appearance—he being such a handsome fellow—that he was not a thief or a robber. The gentleman frowned again and the two conversed together some more. In the end they compromised. Nil Lohit was permitted to pass the night with the servants, but he was to leave the house the first thing in the morning. Nil Lohit's eyes were heavy with sleep. Without a word he went downstairs and lay down in the servants' room. But inwardly he determined to avenge the insult of the Bombay pirate before going back to Bengal.

When he awoke the next day and looked about him, he found it was ten o'clock in the morning. He had scarcely washed and sat down to think, cheek in hand, when he was summoned upstairs. The lady of the house appeared in a new guise. She was dressed like a Bengali in a Dacca sari and embroidered Dacca shawl. There was not a gem on her ; her jewelry was of plain gold. She inquired of Nil Lohit where he wished to go. "The Congress camp," he replied. She said that was impossible, for if the gentleman of the night before were to catch sight of him he would certainly get into trouble, either with guards or goondas. He would be waylaid. Therefore he should return to Bengal at once. She had a suitcase, bedding and return fare ready for him.

But when Nil Lohit heard it was dangerous for him to attend the Congress, he insisted on going. He would go—no matter what happened ! The beautiful lady pleaded at length with him, but he could not be persuaded to give in. A man does not easily admit to a woman that he is afraid. And this lady was as beautiful as Nil Lohit was brave. After much beating

about the bush, it was at last decided that the lady herself would take Nil Lohit to the Congress. He was to go disguised as her maidservant. She declared that no one would touch a hair of his head if she were with him. So after lunch Nil Lohit had to attire himself in the dress of a Punjabi woman. He put on loose embroidered trousers, a *kurti*, and *nagras* and draped a scarf over his head and face. The costume was provided by a Punjabi maidservant of the lady of the house. It fitted Nil Lohit very well, for Punjabi women are about the same size as Bengali men. Then the pair of them rode to the Congress in a half-open carriage and took seats in the ladies' gallery. The business of the Congress began. Suddenly Nil Lohit saw the gentleman of the night before sitting among the important Congress leaders ! He could not control his anger. Taking the *nagra* off his right foot he hurled it at him. The shoe missed and fell at the feet of the President. There was a terrible commotion and the Congress broke up. For a moment the lady was thunderstruck at what Nil Lohit had done. Then she pulled herself together, caught hold of his hand and dragged him out of the tent, got into the carriage and drove home. Within five minutes she had sent him off to the station in the same carriage with suitcase and bedding, dressed once more as a Bengali. At the station Nil Lohit opened the suitcase and found five hundred rupee notes in it, with a photograph of the lady. Buying a ticket with the money, he came back to Bengal. It scandalised us to learn that the epoch-making shoe of the Surat Congress was the footwear of Nil Lohit.

We gaped at each other after hearing this surpassing tale, for we did not know what to make of it. After a silence, Ram Jadab asked him if he had unceremoniously spent the whole of the lovely Surat lady's five hundred rupees. "No," answered Nil Lohit, "I went to Benares and donated the rest of the money for the service of the goddess Annapurna." Again we were silent. Then Mohini Mohan asked, "Have you kept the photo?" "Yes," said Nil Lohit. "Can you show it to us?" was the next

question. "If you want to see it," was the answer, "you can buy one." "Is the photo to be had in the bazar?" was the question. "Any number." was the reply. "How do you mean?" was the question. "If you look at the photo of Nur Jehan you will see the lovely Gujarati", was the answer, "They look very much alike."

Realising it was useless to say anything after that we broke up the party and left.

## THE GERMAN LANGUAGE TODAY

By INGE HAAG

FOR the first time in three decades the Germans are awakening to the alarming signs of deterioration their language shows today. Young people, impatient with vague political talk and obscure writing, demand a return to linguistic simplicity and clarity, and writers who want to reach these young people must accept their challenge. Some have already done so.

The new *Mainzer Allgemeine Zeitung* sets a high standard of clear language and polished style, which had almost disappeared from the German press. The *Frankfurter Hefte*, a widely circulated, influential magazine, which is read by many young people, has also joined the campaign to halt the decay of the German language. It has developed a style which is precise, readable, and comprehensible to readers of all classes and has time and again condemned sloppiness in present-day writing and lack of clarity in the spoken language. Other newspapers, like the *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, run a column calling attention to the most flagrant errors in spoken and written German. In fact, Germans are beginning to take a good look at the state of their language and seem to think that something ought to be done about it.

There is certainly a need for thorough-going reform. Foreign students who meet young Germans at international holiday camps complain that the language of their German friends is unclear and is apt to turn discussion into a whirl of high-sounding but empty phrases. Germans of all classes say that they read less than they used to because the style and language of current books are so complex that they are lost before they can get at the subject. German professors often express

themselves so darkly that even their own students, who should be accustomed to the stilted speech of the German intelligentsia, are unable to follow them. A German political scientist surprised no one when he opened a lecture on Marxism by saying: "my language will be complicated but so is my subject." Einstein's principle that the language should be as simple as the subject is complicated has so far found few adherents among German scholars.

The war and its aftermath have done away with many class barriers, but German intellectuals have barricaded themselves behind new language walls. They are too lazy to speak and write clearly and have developed a vague, erudite language incomprehensible to the man in the street.

The post-war state of the German tongue has widened the gulf which separates Germany from the rest of the world. German books and articles have become almost inaccessible to a foreigner because of their linguistic peculiarities. While translations from foreign languages find a wide market in Germany, publishers abroad reject more and more German writing on the ground that it is unreadable. But the international success of Ernst Juenger's controversial *Marble Cliffs* and Eugen Kogon's *S. S. State*, proves that there is an interest in German books which say clearly what they have to say.

What has happened to the German language? Why has it become so vague? Why is it so often dull, monotonous and weighed down with half-assimilated foreign words?

German has never been noted for exactness or lucidity. Unlike the languages of Latin origin, where a logical structure requires a strict linguistic discipline, German reflects those distinctive characteristics of the German mentality: the love of the irrational and a certain preference for intuition rather than reason. It lends itself more readily to poetical expression than to classic prose forms or the unadorned statement of scientific facts. Consequently, German philosophical and political writing is often unclear and imprecise.

German military men escaped these linguistic dangers because they were taught that the clarity of a definition can be a matter of life and death. Until World War I the General Staff Academy enforced the strictest linguistic discipline and imposed a simple, classic style. In Germany the military had a stronger influence on manners and morals than any other class and set the pattern of speech and writing. Military language preserved its honesty of expression right up to World War I. The Army was the jealous guardian of the language of the "nation of poets and thinkers".

But after the First World War, the language began to disintegrate with alarming speed. Scores of new political and economic programs were introduced by noisy demagogues, and the standards of Reichstag oratory declined. The press began to neglect its duties as a medium of information and interpretation and became a loud speaker for the new slogans. These postwar developments were by no means restricted to Germany alone, but owing to the very nature of the German language, they did more harm there than elsewhere.

Then National Socialism let loose a flood of strange words which soon became part of the daily speech of all classes. Only in a country where political jargon had already drowned the clearly defined language, could Hitler's confused, pretentious *Mein Kampf* have been dangerous. It mattered little if only one reader in a hundred grasped the essence of his ideology. The popular features caught on, but the sinister foundations of Hitler's doctrine remained hidden by the opacity of the language. Foreigners are astonished when intelligent Germans claim, they did not understand the full import of Hitler's program. They protest: "After all, he said so in his book." But after the war a number of top Nazi officials admitted that they had never been able to read more than a hundred pages of *Mein Kampf*. Conscientious students of the book were so puzzled by the complexity of Hitler's language that the full meaning of what he said escaped them. What is true of *Mein Kampf* is true of the



bulk of Nazi writing. Rosenberg, the prophet of the Nordic race, could boast of record sales, but actually had very few readers. The nebulous doctrines of racial supremacy and the New order were propagated by slogans and, without ever having been clearly defined, became common talk. Sham creations like the *Rassenschande* ( racial health ) were the target for jokes in the early days, but were eventually absorbed into everyday language. The *Gleichschaltung* ( levelling ), one of the National Socialist patent remedies for all social, cultural or economic problems, soon became a household word for every kind of adjustment, co-ordination, compulsion or discipline. The term *Ausrichten* ( to dress the ranks ), lost its military implication and began to play an important role in the new ideological terminology. First schools, universities, painters and philosophers were *ausgerichtet*, then through the Hitler Youth Leaders, the *Garanten der Zukunft* ( Guarantee of the future ), *Ausrichtung* reached the family dinner table. Almost anything or anyone could be *ausgerichtet*, in one way or another. Even German business correspondence absorbed the Nazi jargon.

In addition to military and technical terms borrowed and adapted to the needs of the regime, the new vocabulary included perfectly simple words which were heavily inflated or given entirely new meanings. One Reichsmark contributed to a party organisation was called *Opfer* ( sacrifice ) and when, in the disastrous course of the war, real sacrifices were required, the word had become hollow and virtually meaningless. Labour service, memberships in the innumerable National Socialist organisations, and many other demands on the people were labelled by the regime as *freiwillig* ( voluntary ). Germans soon discovered that the word had acquired a new meaning, and even today they are suspicious of any appeal for voluntary services or voluntary contributions. National Socialism had introduced an era of double talk. Words lost their old meanings or made no sense at all, and Germans who failed to keep pace with the new idiom were completely lost.

A plain language was usually employed in the orders issued to the party hierarchy, but the S. S. and the Gestapo developed their own sinister jargon. They referred to the elimination of the Jews as *Endlösung* (last measure). The modest term *zur weiteren Veranlassung* (for further action) described the slaughter of thousands of men and women. The S. S. used a jocular slang to refer to its atrocities, and the inmates of concentration camps soon learnt to dread the *Abspritzung* which meant a lethal injection. Cremation was described as *durch den Schornstein jagen* (to chase up the chimney).

The word *Sonder* (special) was constantly used in this jargon. Even the most unsuspecting Germans soon learned to dread the *Sonderbehandlung* (special treatment), *Sondereinsatz* (special duty) and *Sonderaufgaben* (special job). Not only in the concentration camps, but everywhere in Germany, *Sonder* stood for violence and murder. During the Nuremberg trials, the world had ample opportunity to discover how much a simple word like *special* could convey.

The *Blut Und Boden* (blood and soil) lingo was comparatively harmless in comparison to Gestapo slang. It was seldom taken very seriously by the farmers and peasants at whom it was directed, but its bizarre phrases left their traces in the common language. Post-war German speech has rejected those National Socialist expressions which have lost their appeal or which, like the racial vocabulary of the Nuremberg laws, are too obviously props for Nazi doctrine, but it still uses many of the subtler expressions like *Einsatzbereitschaft* (ready for the job) or *Gefolgschaft* (willing to follow blindly).

Third Reich leaders left a personal heritage to the language. They created a super-lingo in which everything they said or did was described as "the most gigantic", "the most powerful", or "the most colossal in the world history". The men who performed these miracles took care to address each other appropriately with such titles as "beloved Fuhrer" or "Marshall of the most iron-willed energy". When imagination failed, the old legends

supplied ideas. Wilhelm II had talked a great deal about the *Nibelungentreue* (defility of the Nibelungen); Hitler, dreaming of Siegfried and Hagen, coined *Verschworene Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (which means something like "fellowship in a tragic destiny"), which in no time became a favourite with the Storm troopers and the Hitler Youth. Some of these inflated superlatives, ghosts from the grandiose epoch, still haunt German post-war speech.

Hitler, Goering, and the other Nazi leaders often varied their superlingo by introducing a coarse vulgarity of expression as a sign of their *Volksverbundenheit* (unity with the people) and were eagerly imitated by the younger generation. This kind of oratory has also left its traces in today's political speech-making.

When the war broke out, Army slang found its way into the spoken and written German. The oversimplification and generalisation that go with it further undermined the rational foundations of the language. Major fears and daily worries were both described by the same shabby *ersatz* phrases. The language had become uniform and colourless when Dr. Goebbels wrote his poisonous but brilliant articles for *Das Reich*. He exploited all the long-neglected charm and power of the German language, and his amazing success, even in circles hostile to the regime, was to a great extent due to the deftness and precision with which he addressed apathetic people, weary of dull, muddled speaking and writing.

Now the occupation has further complicated Germany's linguistic problem. The occupying authorities have undertaken the political and social re-organisation of Germany, but the "denazified, democratised, and re-oriented" German still uses a stale mixture of National Socialist jargon and German Army slang seasoned with post-war expressions which vary according to the zone of occupation. Germans in the Russian zone have developed a distinctive language of their own. The publicity given to "work heroes" and the "Hennecke cult" (Hennecke

worked several shifts without a break ) fills the newspapers in the Eastern zone with expressions entirely foreign to Germans in the West.

It will be no easy task to cut out some thirty years of linguistic wild growth. Zonal barriers, divergencies in the educational and cultural policies of the four occupying powers, the scarcity and high price of school-books and books in general are temporary impediments. But as Germany constructs an independent democratic culture on the ruins of her disastrous past, the language will adjust itself to new requirements. A new Germany will need a new German language.

## IN DEFENCE OF THOMAS MANN

By ALEX ARONSON.

THOSE WHO in the past accused Thomas Mann of intellectual pretensions and affectations might find in his latest novel, *Doktor Faustus*, increasing evidence for their accusations. A new page, they well say, has been added to his exhibition of cyclopaedic knowledge; chapter upon chapter dealing with the theory and practice of music fill this novel, just as in the past Thomas Mann indulged in prognostication about disease ( in the *Magic Mountain* ), about the Bible ( in the *Joseph Legends* ), about Goethe ( in *Lotte in Weimar* ). This last book of his, they will say, only proves that Thomas Mann knows all there is to be known about life, that all mysteries of human existence have been solved by him, and that no field of human activity has been left untouched in his novels. A versatile and inquisitive mind, they might admit, stimulating in a frigid sort of way. One does not get warm when reading Thomas Mann, they will probably complain; the icy regions where his mind dwells are not meant for ordinary human beings. Only a Goethe, a Joseph, an Adrian Leverkühn ( the hero of *Doktor Faustus* ), can breathe that rarefied atmosphere and still remain alive. And their conclusion will be as devastating as it is preposterous: let Thomas Mann's novels be read by those who are sufficiently aloof to be able to afford that extreme detachment from daily life which characterises his own heroes. For are not, they ask, all his novels "magic mountains" onto which escape all the "pure spirits" when life threatens to become troublesome?

And there are, of course, those who say that Thomas Mann after *The Buddenbrooks*, has never been able to write a novel properly so called. Instead he wrote dissertation of merely

academic interest. A novel, we are told, must have a plot taken from life, easily intelligible to the common reader. Thomas Mann's latest novels have no "plot" much to speak of, the life of the common reader is hardly at all reflected in them, and as for intelligibility, only people specialised in some branch of knowledge or other can grasp them.

The relativity of the plot-concept has been demonstrated in recent times in more than one famous instance. We know of a kind of novel half of which is written in dramatic form, and others the plot of which is so irrelevant as to be almost overlooked by both reader and critic, and others still which are nothing but interior monologue. We know of novels in which only an atmosphere is created, the characters being part of this atmosphere just like the treasure houses, the mountains which constitute the atmosphere. And what are we to think of those novels which attempt to reproduce neither a plot nor characters, but an age, like John Dos Passos' *USA*? The novel as a literary form has been subjected to experimentation during the last twenty-five years and it would be very unfair to accuse Thomas Mann of having evolved a form of diction which is both unusual and difficult to grasp at first sight.

A novelist who, as Thomas Mann, is so strongly guided by intellectual prognostications has a right to discover his own literary form and to adjust his picture of life to that newly found form. He will work by a process of selection and his frame of reference will not be the amorphous multiplicity of life (as in John Dos Passos or James Joyce), but rather that unity which lies hidden behind all human effort, a unity which the writer has to superimpose upon life. To find unity in life is an essentially artificial way of looking at things. Thomas Mann's novels are artificial in that sense only: all art, indeed, is "artificial" when the process of selection comes into operation. For the work of selection implies a good deal of arbitrariness and a deliberate exclusion of elements not directly relevant to the story the novelist set out to tell. A few words, I believe, must first be said

about Thomas Mann's peculiar and symptomatic process of selection before attempting an analysis of his latest work.

The question we wish to put is simple enough: is his selection of material out of the multiplicity of life merely arbitrary or does he not follow some unifying principle which adds ever new significances to the material thus selected? For, surely every novelist is in search of significance when he, according to those mysterious laws of selection, lights up a fragment of life while leaving the rest in darkness. Did Thomas Mann succeed in making those fragments relevant to us, that is to say, does the light he sheds upon them convince us that we are face to face with a new significance hitherto unknown because undiscovered?

Thomas Mann's position among modern novelists is unique in so far as he is infinitely more bound by tradition than anyone else. He never posed as a revolutionary in matters of politics, religion, sex or literary form. On the other hand, however, his analytical mind never accepted traditional interpretations without subjecting them to criticism. His criticism, let it be said once and for all, never goes beyond the accepted standards of conduct, of social morality, of spiritual conformity. Throughout his literary career, Thomas Mann played the part of a conformist in an essentially non-conformist society. This, indeed, is the paradox,—and the unifying principle, in his work: while in the past the artist and writer refused to conform to given conditions of existence ( the old Goethe, of course, was a notable exception to this rule ) Thomas Mann, living in an age of transition revaluation, again and again emphasized those elements of the past which seem to him too valuable to be allowed to die; those elements, in short, which point towards conformity in an age increasingly aware of its own decline and breakdown, of values!

Thomas Mann's concern with values in an age that had so evidently broken with values of any kind, implies a conflict. It is this conflict, portrayed in terms of human destinies, that justifies his art as a novelist. For though he seems to point backward into the past, the present and the future are for ever

menacingly present. For every Settembrini there is a Naphta, as it were, waiting round the corner ; conformity to what seemed good and beautiful to our forefathers is opposed to what will seem good and beautiful to our grand-children. Awareness of the past produces awareness of the future. In between is what unifies the two : the death of the old and the birth of the new, disruption of long-standing agreements, the birthpangs of a new conformity. And in between the old and the new stands the artist, the creator of a new conformity, the one who knows too much, and whose awareness leads to divided loyalties, an acceptance of the past for the sake of tradition and the common norm, —a realization of the future, inescapable indeed, because the future lies within him.

Thomas Mann's preoccupation with the problem of the artist stands for his concern with values. His first short-stories deal with the life of writers: *Tonio Kröger* and *Death in Venice* are two little masterpieces pertaining to the conflict between what is good and beautiful and unpretentious and the disruptive forces of creation. Tonio Kröger, the artist with his divided loyalty, profoundly attracted by the simple blue-eyed innocence of his childhood friends and yet knowing that creation can never be either simple or innocent, that indeed it must lead him away from the beaten track onto perilous paths as yet untrodden by men. He knows,—this rather adolescent Tonio Kröger, that once he yields to the blue-eyed simplicity which so easily and gracefully conforms to life, there will be no more pain, no more suffering, no more creation. And he chooses the path of solitude which is the path of creation. Innocence which is good and beautiful may indeed become the artist's greatest temptation, as it is the case with the writer Aschenbach in *Death in Venice*. He who had passed through all the tribulations that creative art implies "falls victim" to the blue-eyed innocence of the boy Tadzio, literally wrecking his own life, because only the artist can feel as helpless before the good and beautiful as Aschenbach does. Here indeed we find the conflict of which I spoke ; the



artist alone is capable of realizing the existence of conformity and harmony in life, while at the same time his very inner being is mortally afraid of it. For does he not know ( and who else *could* know it ) that beauty, the beauty of the flesh and the simplicity of the mind, only tempt him away from his task which is to open up new vistas for the future, a future which is neither simple nor innocent nor blue-eyed ;...The artist as path-finder, as prophet ; the artist's unconscious alliance with the powers of darkness ; the artist who only by denying what is good and beautiful in life can create goodness and beauty in his art,—that is the subject-matter, the “plot” of most of Thomas Mann's significant works. Incidentally, it is also the main theme of his latest novel, *Doktor Faustus*.

A theme with variations, be it understood : for what is the *Magic Mountain*, if not the same conflict between the conformity of the plains and the non-conformity of the hills of Davos, between the Humanism of the good and the beautiful of Settembrini and the sinister religious terrorism of a Naphta contesting for Hans Kastorp's innocent soul. What is *Lotte in Weimar*, if not the rather tragi-comical meeting of the old Goethe with his simple blue-eyed past, and his inability to grasp the conflict any more, having out-grown the stage where such conflicts have any meaning at all and having ultimately achieved what may be called the artist's conformity with his own art. Lotte, Werther's Lotte was ( like Tonio Kröger's and Aschenbach's experiences ) only a means towards an end : creation. Once creation had been achieved, all the Hans Hansens, all the Tadzio's, all the Lottes fall back into oblivion, into that conformity from where they sprang and to which they, essentially, belong. That they, at one time, because of their “blue-eyedness”, caused pain and exaltation and creative fervour, was their good fortune and their humiliation. Stepping-stones they were towards regions where they could not follow the creator. They only witnessed the pain and the agony. The exaltation was not for them.

Adrian Leverkühn, the hero of *Doktor Faustus*, belongs to that small group of characters in world's literature who represent the striving of the artist and the intellectual for personal fulfilment in an antagonistic environment. An equal among equals, he at times resembles Goethe's Faust, at times Shakespeare's Hamlet, at times he can be identified with Nietzsche. Worldly success and spiritual disillusionment are strongly intermingled in his life. As all spiritual giants he dwells in solitude. His most intense creative effort ends in insanity. And we are somehow made to feel that what Thomas Mann had hinted at in his earlier works is here carried to its logical conclusion; the creative artist, by the very nature of his work, denies the existence of conformity and order in life; and his attempts to recreate order "in his own image", the order that gives significance to his own art, implies such an intense denial to what is simple and innocent and common, that it necessarily must lead to a mental breakdown.

The story of Adrian Leverkühn is the story of a modern German composer who expresses in terms of music his awareness of disintegration. His greatest musical compositions are lamentations composed in the spirit of Durer's Apocalypse. Everyone of his greatest works is a step away from musical tradition, a searching for new musical forms, for a new medium of expression. A scrupulous avoidance of the commonplace, the melodramatic, the pretentious, characterises his music. The break with the past is complete, at least the immediate past. Instead we find him experimenting with long forgotten musical forms, trying to adapt them to contemporary use, and discovering new and unthought of tonal modulations. Thomas Mann seems to admit by implication that ordinary musical terminology is hardly sufficient to describe Adrian Leverkühn's bold and profoundly convincing experiments. Thus much, however, is made clear: his music forms a synthesis of the far-away past and the far-away future. The public is unable to grasp either the one or the other. As for the synthesis, it is evidently beyond the grasp of the average concert-goer's intellectual level.

That art is something sinful, something allied to the powers of evil, is nothing new in the history of world literature. From Plato to Tolstoy we come across condemnations of the artist as an outcaste of society, one who deliberately refuses to adjust himself to the common norm, and one who unknowingly does uncalculable harm to the social group within which he lives. The artist is of the devil's party ; no angels ever come to redeem him. And when Goethe makes his Faust be redeemed by the blessed spirits of light, he, in a way, modifies his own creation. Faust is no longer a seeker, one who strives after perfection, but one who has found and is now fulfilling his task. At the end of Goethe's play Faust has ceased to be of the devil's party. He no longer searches for fulfilment in the realm of the spirit ; he has returned to the earth, his mother, and has become, to all intents and purposes, a tiller of the soil ; by upturning the virgin soil he is again one of the many—the simple, innocent, blue-eyed many.

No such fate is reserved for Adrian Leverkühn. Once he plunges headlong into the whirlpool of artistic creation, he knows that redemption is not for him. Torn asunder between the twin impulses of artistic creation and intellectual analysis, he rushes into disaster, knowing that it is inevitable. In his personal life every attempt to establish some kind of intimacy between himself and the "common norm" ends in failure. Friendship and love lead to complete disillusionment. As every artist he also is powerfully attracted by the simple and the innocent in human nature. Disaster after disaster convinces him that his love for the blue-eyed, the common, the beautiful and the good, constitutes a dangerous deviation from his own artistic integrity, and that to recreate the world "in his own image" implies a complete denial of these joys of the flesh and the spirit unquestioningly accepted by the multitude. Yes, he is of the devil's party even where his personal relationships are concerned.

The story of Adrian Leverkühn is narrated by a friend, Dr.

Senenus Zeitblum, a classical scholar and lecturer in a German University and, incidentally, a feeble and pale reflection of that other scholar in Thomas Mann's work, Settembrini. He begins his story at the time of German victories all over Europe and he ends it when defeat had become a certainty. The parallelism between Adrian Leverkühn's life and the collective destiny of the German people is too obvious to be stressed. The one indeed merges into the other. For does not Leverkühn's own lost soul and final disaster symbolise the curse that had to follow? Does not the insanity that darkens a great mind reflect, on a higher level as it were, the moral bankruptcy of a once great people?

Tonio Kröger, Aschenbach, Hans Kastorp, the Biblical Joseph,—none of them ever broke with life as completely as did Adrian Leverkühn. They were somehow more human and the perspective in which they were seen depicted was neither visionary nor terrifying. In this latest book of Thomas Mann we seem at times to be moving as though in a dream, a nightmare of shifting perspectives where the downfall of a nation is, at least towards the end of the book, almost identified with the disintegration of a gigantic mind. A book of apocalyptic visions—the book of a disillusioned old man. For such indeed is the picture we have today of Thomas Mann: old age has not given him that detachment and aloofness we usually associate with the creations of old age. Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven, each one of them achieved a degree of maturity in their latest works which, in a manner of speaking, contradicted all their earlier productions. There is redemption in Goethe's *Faust* as there is in Shakespeare's *Tempest* and in Beethoven's last Quartetts. There is indeed little hope for redemption in Thomas Mann's latest novel. Perhaps it is symptomatic of our age that its greatest living novelist should also have been the one who has given us the most profoundly agonising description of spiritual anguish in our time.

And out of this anguish, so we are told, there is no escape. Dr. Serenus Zeitblum, the narrator of this story, can only fold his hands in prayer when the story is told and the hero is no

more. The frustration, we are afraid, is Thomas Mann's own disillusionment with life. Did he perhaps realise that simplicity, innocence, and the blue-eyed common norm are no longer either good or beautiful, and that they have been replaced by ignorance, covetousness, and cruelty; and that the artist, surrounded as he is by the powers of evil from within and from without, can express his experience of life only in apocalyptic visions, while we are left to mourn and to pray for his lost soul...

Those, however, among Thomas Mann's readers who are themselves of the devil's party may not be quite convinced by Dr. Serenus Zeitblum and his prayer. Salvation, they know, lies elsewhere. Not among the angels, the blessed spirits of light : not even in conformity to the many, and on no magic mountain. The artist's integrity alone justifies his existence on earth. Should Thomas Mann have forgotten that no other justification if required, even if this integrity should have been bought at the price of eternal damnation by the powers of darkness and evil ? Let the Humanists pray for redemption. The artist, a tool in the hands of his maker—be it a Devil or a God—dwells where no redemption can ever reach him : in a self-created universe which may be either Heaven or Hell,—or both.

## WHAT IS CRITICISM

By JULIEN BENDA

A FEW YEARS AGO, I had the honour of having one of my own critical remarks chosen as the subject of a competitive composition at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. What I said was : "Works of art interest me more than the personality of their authors ; I should like my own to be read, as though they had been found unsigned in a bottle washed up on the sea shores. I am glad that there are great works of literature whose authors are unknown : the Bible, the Homeric epic, the Imitation of Christ, the Shakespearcan dramas." But almost all the young intellectuals of the Ecole Normale Supérieure repudiated my thesis. They wanted works of literature to be bound to personalities. And here we can put our finger on a confusion which is widespread today. The study of a work of art is confused with the study of a personality ; literary criticism has become psycho-analysis. A host of critical studies of Marcel Proust exemplify this confusion. They study the author's heredity, the education he received, his physical suffering, tell us when he got up in the morning and when he went to bed at night, discuss his social circles, his manias in clothes and cooking. But his work and its values *in themselves* are seldom discussed, in spite of the fact that the essential task of literary criticism is the study of that work.

You may object that a knowledge of the author's personality is essential to the understanding of the creation of his work. But the creation of a work is one thing and the work itself is another. Literary criticism studies the finished work and evaluates it in literary and aesthetic terms. I do not see how my literary evaluation of *Salammbô* is facilitated if I know

that Flaubert was epileptic, or of *Childe Harolde* if I learn that Byron had an incestuous passion for his half-sister.

Sainte-Beuve is, to a very large extent responsible for this confusion. He was far more concerned with an author's personality than with his work, far more concerned with psychological than with literary phenomena. But it should be clear, that a tragedy like *Phèdre* has a life of its own, quite independent of Racine's own life. Sainte-Beuve filled his pages with characters ; women and judges, officers and courtiers, who have no importance from a literary point of view, who are simply occasions to describe a personality. Sainte-Beuve attaches far less importance to the great works of his great writers than to their notes, their projects, their intimate letters, which are all far more indicative of the personality. This kind of dramatic criticism may have a savoury interest for the general public, but I do not feel that it is the highest form of criticism.

This interest in the genesis of a work rather than in the finished work has been affirmed by a well-known French writer. Monsieur Gaston Bachelard discussing a poem by Edgar Allan Poe in his book *L'Eau et les Rêves*, announces that he is in no way interested in the finished poem ; only the intellectual activity which created it interests him. And André Gide has declared that what interests him is the creative emotion and not the frozen, immobile expression which is the result of it. But it is this frozen, immobile expression which constitutes the work of literature, and criticism consists in the examination of this expression.

It is easy to understand the success of the critical movement which studies the writer rather than what he has written. People are more entertaining than books, and the average reader is satisfied if he is amused. But is criticism obliged to entertain the average reader ?

I have already remarked that a great deal has been said about Proust the man and very little about his work. His work has been discussed, to be sure, but the discussion is rarely

more than admiring praise. Here we touch on another fault of contemporary criticism. Certain modern authors are discussed with a lyricism which refuses to see or to admit that their work has any imperfections, even though the greatest of them—Caudel, Valery, Bernanos, Peguy—all have their faults. I am sure that you will agree that *apologetics is not criticism*. Criticism must always be cool, steady and objective. It may, perhaps be enthusiastic from time to time, but this enthusiasm is a luxury, not a necessity.

There is another modern critical conception which seems to me to be completely false at least in the absolute way in which it is generally posited. This is the principle that the critic should judge in a spirit of communion with the writer. This theory has been put forward by Charles du Bos, Gabriel Marcel, and Thibaudet. I admit ( and even here there is ground for dispute ) that the critic should *begin* in such a communion, but I insist that he must afterwards leave this state and rise above the creator's work and judge it. Du Bos and his allies grant that this movement is necessary, but argue that it is simply a prolongation of the first state. This I deny categorically. Reflection on life is not a natural prolongation of life, but an activity of an entirely different nature. The utmost confusion awaits any philosopher who, departing from what is strictly vital and totally unintellectual, tries to pass continuously to intellectual activity. When followers of Bergson are asked how purely instinctive life, the *durée*, can become reflection on life, they answer that life "swells and grows", "twists itself around," or some other such dramatic image which means nothing at all. Similarly, the existentialists, heirs of Bergson who never mention his name, insist that the change from pure existence to the intelligence of existence is a natural development. But the truth would seem to be what the philosopher Henri Delacroix has said: "The intelligence is a primary fact and all attempts to deduce it from some other principle have been failures."



Perhaps an example will clarify this discontinuity between life and reflection on life. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse wrote : "Most women would rather be preferred to another woman than be loved." I grant that in order to arrive at this idea the ardent Julie de Lespinasse had suffered the torments of jealousy—the elegant Colonel de Guibert must have given her the occasion often enough—but I insist that afterwards she made use of something quite different from her suffering, her faculty of self-analysis and her capacity to form general ideas. A little working girl who has only her suffering may "swell it", "twist it" to the end of her days ; she will never arrive at a general idea like Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's maxim. And so, to go back to our subject, I insist that the critic's activity is not at all a prolongation of the creator's activity, but something entirely different.

You may object : "Then how can you explain why creative artists, poets in particular, have been the best critics ?" And you will cite the case of Baudelaire. In answer I say that Baudelaire simply had the good fortune to possess both the creative and the critical gift, which in no way proves that these two gifts are not profoundly different.

Then there is the graver objection : "Then, with your distinction between critic and creator, you admit that the critic's work is not creative." But the critic's work can very well be creative *in so far as it is* criticism. It can reveal a well-known work in an entirely new light, help us see unsuspected relationships between works that seemed quite different. This kind of criticism is comparative criticism and seems to me the highest form of criticism. The very best examples of it are Teuffel's *History of Roman Literature* and Taine's *History of English Literature*.

And here I should like to cite that famous line of Des-touches which has been falsely attributed to Boileau : "La critique est aisée et l'art est difficile." "Criticism is easy and art is difficult."

But the truth is that criticism is not at all easy and requires talent which is extremely rare. Great artists, poets, painters, musicians, are not common, to be sure, but there have been far, far more of them than great critics. All the great critics since the beginnings of criticism can be counted on the finger of our hands.

A type of criticism extremely popular today is what I shall call *emotional criticism*, criticism which makes an act of piety in honour of some great man whose work is assumed to be above criticism. Louis Bertrand's *Saint Augustin*, Suarez's *Tolstoi*, Romain Rolland's *Beethoven* are typical of this emotional manner. But none of these books are critical, no one of them is a work of criticism, for criticism is a work of the intelligence, not an effusion of the heart.

Now someone will ask : "To whom is criticism addressed?" I say that it is intended for the man who in old France was called "*l'honnête homme*" (the honest man) the educated man who is open to all that touches human sensibility and the non-specialized intelligence. But a certain amount of contemporary criticism is intended exclusively for an audience of initiates. You are all familiar with those critical reviews—generally devoted to poetry—which discuss a certain poet's use of the word "crystal" or the frequency of the letter "f" in another writer's work. These reviews are just as incomprehensible to the general public as trade and technical magazines intended for electricians or horticulturists. The real critics speak to men in general, to civilized humanity as a whole, ( even if they do not address the masses ).

I should like to conclude this address by discussing what seem to me to be the two signs of a great critic, signs which, unfortunately, are rarer and rarer these days.

I can best describe the first quality by recalling an ancient definition of the historian. The historian, said Lucian of Samosate, should have no fatherland ; his love of truth should lift him above his love for his nation. In the same way the

real critic should seek a timeless truth and try to lift himself above his own natural predilection of his own epoch. But today's critics not only do not strive for this detachment, they seem to feel that historical objectivity is a kind of weakness. A few years back I read in the *Nouvelle Revue Francaise* that a certain novel was excellent because it was "so completely 1932" and more recently in an important literary review that Malraux is the greatest novelist of our time because he is "the most contemporary". I should like to make a reproach against criticism and the critics that needs to be but never is made. The critics are constantly blamed for their failure to recognize the great men of their own times ; Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Apollinaire. We tend to forget all the altars that critics have set up in honour of false Gods : Delille, Casimir Delavigne, and closer to us, Paul Hervieu, Francois de Curel, Porto-Riche, Henri Bataille—names already forgotten or unknown to the younger generation of readers. An old adage taught in all law school declares that, justice is the rampart which protects right against the mob's disorder. Criticism should be the rampart which protects the real values of works of art against the errors of popular judgment. But today critics follow the flow of popular taste far more often than they turn against it. It is dangerous to contradict the temper of the times ( personal experience has taught me this ), and critics are rarely as courageous as they should be.

The numberless errors that popular taste has made through the history of written literature should make the critic prudent, should teach him to ask himself if the books which are popular today may not in fifty years time, perhaps even sooner, share the fate of a Hervieu or a Curel. Our critics are very seldom suspicious enough. Each generation wants to have its own great men, and if they do not appear, the generation will invent them. I propose that we all consider what Maurice Barres has said : "Certain men reach high places ; not through any merit of their own, but simply because those high places must be filled."

In this way, a poet who is no more than competent is hailed as a great poet by his contemporaries. A novelist who is no more than talented is compared with Balzac and Flaubert. A confused idealist is hailed as a major philosopher equal to a Descartes or a Kant. Each generation wants its great poet, its great novelist, its great philosopher. The critic must expose these counterfeits even though it may cost him his peace.

The second characteristic of the real critic is closely related to the first : the critic must be capable of objective examination and avoid an emotional obedience to his own temperament. Some critics boast that their appreciation is immediate and emotional, but actually their criticism should transcend their own personality. At the beginning of this century the French critic gave us a splendid example of this objectivity. Beginning a series of articles on Emile Zola, Jules Lemaitre declared that nothing could be more unsympathetic to him than Zola's art, but that he had determined to overcome his hostility and make it an act of objectivity. And he wrote three articles admirable for their understanding and their justice. Our contemporary critics should strive to attain this intellectual liberty. To be sure, pure objectivity is impossible ; subjectivity can never be entirely banished from criticism, but we must work for the closest approximation possible and never abandon the ideal.

Will and creative intelligence are human characteristics, but they are not peculiar to human beings. Animals have wills ; some animals seem to have creative intelligence. But there is another characteristic, less obvious perhaps, which belongs to man alone, and, in a way, crowns all his other characteristics. It is judgment. And I should like to conclude this address by proposing a definition in answer to our question, "what is criticism ?" *Criticism is judgment.*

## THE LOCUS OF SOVEREIGNTY

By P. S. NAIDU

AMONG THE MANY CRITICISMS levelled against the new constitution of the Indian Republic, there is one that merits the attention of the student of political science. "It is usual to state specifically", says a critic, "in a republican constitution that sovereignty is derived from the people. In our new constitution, although there is a reference to the 'people of India' in the preamble, there is nothing in the operative part of the constitution which says that power emanates from the people. Some such provision as Article 6(1) of the Irish constitution would have been more definite in recognising the indisputable sovereignty of the people of India".<sup>1</sup> We agree with the critic generally, and so we raise the fundamental question, 'Where does the locus of sovereignty lie in an independent country?' It is not easy to answer the question. Let us, therefore, probe deep into the philosophical foundations of the concept of sovereignty.

Where does the supreme and ultimate power lie in a Sovereign *Democratic* Republic? Does it lie in the legislature, or in the party to which the majority in the legislature owe their allegiance, or in the will of the people as a whole? No clear answer to the question seems to be forthcoming, as political theorists are not agreed as to the exact locus of sovereignty. Professor C. E. M. Joad throws up his hands in despair and says, "I personally happen to hold the view that sovereignty *ought* to reside in the people as a whole, but this view owns no more authoritative basis than my own unsupported intuition, and I do not know how to defend the assertion if I

1 *Our New Constitution* by S. K. Sen, Uttarayan Ld. Calcutta.

were challenged. That sovereignty ought to reside in the people seems to me self-evident but I am well aware that it is far from being evident to all people. Moreover, I do not see how it is possible to prove by argument either that the people can or should or cannot or should not, delegate its sovereign powers to representative persons or bodies".<sup>2</sup>

As against this hesitant statement, we may remind ourselves of what J. S. Mill has written in his *Considerations of Representative Government* (1861). "I have no difficulty in showing that the ideally best form of government is" says Mill, "that in which the sovereignty, or supreme controlling power in the last resort is vested in the entire aggregate of the community : Every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty, but being, at least occasionally called on to take an actual part in the government by the personal discharge of some public function, local or general". That it is a far cry from Mill to Professor Joad is, no doubt, true. Nearly nine decades have passed since Mill wrote his treatise on political science, and within the last quarter of a century or such cataclysmic changes have occurred in the political atmosphere of the world that one may turn pessimistic when one has to face the supreme problem of the locus of sovereignty. And in political science, the *IS* and the *Ought*, fact and its application, theory and practice are so closely intertwined, that the *IS* is often mistaken for the *Ought*. Of late, pragmatism has been influencing the thinkers in political science, and what appears to be good for a short period of time is enthroned as the summum bonum. These considerations, however, need not stand in our way when we undertake an objective analysis of sovereignty, because all types of totalitarianism are proving their utter worthlessness and moral bankruptcy in the present state of human evolution.

Let us commence our analysis of the locus of sovereignty with a statement of the connotation of the term sovereignty. By

2 *Guide to Philosophy of Morals and Politics*, p. 581.

sovereignty we mean the *supreme power* within the group. It is as Professor Joad says, "the ultimate repository of power, some authority which is the source of the authority of all the other persons or institutions who and which possess authority, but which derives its authority from nobody and nothing outside itself." When sovereignty is understood in this sense, the two questions arise naturally in our minds : (1) What is meant by sovereignty within the group, and where does it reside, and (2) Is there any sovereignty outside the group to which its own sovereignty is subject ? We may restate the questions in a slightly different form thus : (1) To whom within the group is the government of the country responsible, and (2) Is the government of one group wholly independent of the governments of other groups ? The second question relates to internationalism, and it is not our concern at present. Let us concentrate our attention on the first question.

When we take up the problem of sovereignty within the group, we find at once that we have to face two important questions, the first relating to the *nature* of sovereignty and the second to the *locus* of sovereignty. In regard to the first question we must admit that though the general consensus of opinion favours a monistic view, yet there are thinkers of the status of Laski and Graham Wallas who defend the pluralistic position very vigorously. In spite of the many influential advocates of pluralism, political practice favours, in an overwhelming measure, the monistic view. Sovereignty then, we may conclude is one and indivisible and is resident in the people as a whole.

Granting that sovereignty is indivisible, the further question arises, where does it reside ? Once again we are confronted with conflicting views on the exact locus of sovereignty. One school of opinion holds that sovereignty resides in *one* or a few privileged individuals within the group. This theory is based on absolutistic, and oligarchic forms of government. The other and diametrically opposed school subscribes to the view that

sovereignty is vested in all the individuals of a group. It is the view that underlies all types of democratic government.

In estimating the relative merits and demerits of these opposed views, the student of political science has to guide himself by the achievements of the various types of government. We in this decade of the twentieth century have the advantage of witnessing democratic as well as all types of totalitarian governments at work. We can therefore fix the locus of sovereignty without having our vision clouded by the blinding admiration which surrounded totalitarianism a few years ago.

There are two fundamental values in relation to which all political theories and practices have to be judged as regards their worthiness or worthlessness. The first of these is the eternal and inalienable dignity of human personality and the freedom of that personality. The individual human being is an end in himself; he is never to be treated as a means to some other end. The only justification for the existence of the state is the preservation of the freedom of the individual. The second is the principle that the welfare of the citizens, individually and collectively, is the only function of the state. These two values are supreme in the political field. Even tyrants and dictators have put forth the welfare of the group as an excuse for all their tyrannical and undemocratic acts. So, even the wildest opponents of democracy have recognised the people as the final custodians of sovereignty. It is clear, therefore, that the ideals which inspire the truly democratic form of government have stood the test of time, and that by their flexibility and innate spiritual dynamism are capable of unlimited progress towards perfection. The practices of all other forms of government are stultifying and derogatory to human personality.

But power is a great corruptor of human nature, and we have witnessed many a sorry example of this in dictatorial forms of government. "A majority is tyrannical", wrote Lord Bryce in his *American Commonwealth*, "when it decides without hearing the minority, when it suppresses fair and temperate criticism of



its own acts." Plato foresaw this danger long ago, and Mill desiring to emphasise the essential dignity of human personality writes, "Mankind are greater gainers by suffering each other to live as seems good to themselves than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest, for the only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it." The consideration of freedom raised by Mill has a very important bearing on the conception of sovereignty, and so great was the renowned thinker's insistence on the need for the free play and expression of individual opinion, and for the vindication of the freedom of individual behaviour unfettered by 'the timidities and unconfined by the conventionalities of the majority,' that he was forced to locate sovereignty in the superior minority. We do not agree to this view, but we do hold that the exalted liberal view which lies at the back of it should be upheld by all right-thinking men. The only thing which is good in itself in the world of politics is the personality, dignity and freedom of the individual human being however low and humble he be in the social scale. Every political doctrine and every form of government should be so framed as to respect his personality and inalienable freedom of the individual.

Our conclusion, then, is that sovereignty is one and indivisible, and resides in the people as a whole. How should political practice be shaped in order to make this view of sovereignty real and effective in the actual running of a democratic government. The first requisite is the existence and effective functioning of an *opposition*. The party in opposition is the life and soul of a democratic type of government. Where opposition does not exist there is only tyranny and sub-human functioning of life in the state. Then in the second place there should be considerable decentralisation of sovereign power. In our country the village should be made the vital centre of legislative, administrative and judicial power. The

village should have a *council of elders* composed of persons over 45 years in age, chosen by suitable means. This council should be composed of men of experience, wisdom, tact and social influence. The whole village should participate in electing these elders. One half of the number should retire every year, and the retiring members should not be eligible for re-appointment for two years. This council should wield supreme power over the whole village, dispensing justice, and ministering to the welfare of the village community in all ways.

The village should send its representatives direct to the District and Provincial Councils. An age-limit somewhat lower than the village limit should be prescribed for these councils. Half the number of these bodies should retire every year, and should not be eligible for re-election for two successive years.

And above all, there should be permanent irremovable judiciary, appointed for life and armed with powers to check undemocratic tendencies in law-making. The whole machinery of government should be so devised that the party in power will be kept ever vigilant and obliged to justify their executive measures to enlightened critics among the public. It should be impossible for the executive to enact any law merely on the basis of the majority strength in the legislature. The group as a whole must approve of any fundamental or radical changes that may be made in the law of the land.

I may conclude with what I have said elsewhere in regard to the exercise of authority by the majority party in power. In a spiritualised democracy, the sole purpose of whose existence is the maintenance of the liberty of the citizen, the only person who may be entrusted with the task of governing the country is he, who has reached a state of detachment from the world. He will be in the world but not of it. There should be a panel of these *jivanmuktas* conducting the affairs of the state. They should by turns retire for specified periods to mediate and draw inspiration from the spiritual levels of the universe. Such detached rulers will know how to maintain the liberty of the

individual through the exercise of authority. They will make wise laws and in enforcing these laws they will never exercise self-assertion, but only sympathy. They will submit their policies to the unsparing criticism of the group, for they will be sure of the foundations on which they have built up their legislative enactments. In exercising power inside the framework of the government there is the ever present danger of the self-assertive propensity being rekindled even in the mind of the *jivanmukta*. And the only ballast for self-assertion is submission. And submission can be effectively stimulated only by the criticism of a party in opposition.

In a world where democracy is in the doldrums, and dictatorship, totalitarianism, communism and other soul-killing forms of government are spreading, it is necessary to guard jealously the dignity and freedom of the individual citizen in whom alone lies the true locus of sovereignty. If this is to be done then the plan sketched above should be accepted as fundamental to democracy.

## ASCETICISM IN TAGORE'S AESTHETICS

By PRABAS JIBAN CHAUDHURY

And in the midst of this wide quietness,  
A rosy sanctuary will I dress—Kents.

THE ASCETIC ideal of beauty set up and worshipped by the Scholastics as well as the Indian aestheticians in the medieval period has fallen into disrepute in our age of positivism and even the best efforts of a Maritain<sup>1</sup> or a Coomaraswamy<sup>2</sup> could not revive it. Ascetic beauty does not mean an abstract and, so, nugatory, principle, but a concrete spiritual one which operates not by annihilating feelings and sensations but by controlling and organising them. This demands a greater detachment from them than does extirpation of them; employment of the senses as a means to spirituality implies a deeper and a bolder self-discipline than total rejection of them. But modern aesthetics makes a fetish of them and confuses beauty with the pleasurable.

It is strange and regrettable that Tagore is sometimes identified with an aesthete dallying with easy beauty and refinements of a leisured life, a delicate artist of all that is soft and sweet,—flowing water, dancing flowers, floating clouds and the play of light and shade on undulating paddy fields. Perhaps this notion is not as strange as it appears at first. An artist in a country like India where the majority of the people are weighed down by their vital needs may easily be dubbed an easy-going aesthete, for that is exactly what the people themselves want to be. So it is a case of projection and, moreover, it helps some

1 Jacques Maritain : *Art and Scholasticism* ( 1946 ).

2 A. K. Coomaraswamy - *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought* ( 1946 ).

to rationalise their escapism and irresponsible hedonism. However, great men are often misunderstood, and their creeds distorted and misapplied. What we seek here to establish is that Tagore was just the opposite of the conventional aesthete ; that though he held renunciation to be no cult of his, he shows ascetic leanings in his aesthetic theory. His aesthetics is out and out metaphysical and not naturalistic or psychological, with the result that beauty is separated from charm by the whole dimension of physical becoming, and so are its characters, aesthetic delight, truth and absolute goodness, separated from their respective naturalistic analogues, pleasure, facthood and relative goodness or utility. In fine, Tagore's conception of beauty is spiritual and it is neither sensational nor intellectual and so his conception of art too is transcendental. To realise this beauty and art one has to discipline the affective and cognitive tendencies of one's nature and to realise the essential unity of his higher self with the spirit of the outer objects.

Let us examine this in greater detail. Beauty for Tagore is nothing but the sense of unity and self-enlargement one experiences when one realises the essential kinship of one's own self with the spirit of objects without. "Beauty is but a bridge between the self and matter."<sup>3</sup> This bridge-building is a natural consequence of the metaphysical fact that whatever appears strange is but our self, so that "the function of the soul is to fraternise with others."<sup>4</sup> Beauty can thus be realised only on a metaphysical plane where the ultimate natures of our self and the world are seized and the identity of the two experienced. To enjoy true beauty is, therefore, not a matter of feeling or reasoning but of transcension of these and intuition of the very self that is reality itself. Tagore's theory of beauty is neither sensational like that of some hedonists (e. g. Marshall, Santayana) nor intellectual like that of the formalists ( e. g. Plato, Aristotle, Clive Bell and Roger Fry ). Nor is it like Kant's theory based

3 *Panchabhat*, p. 81.

4 *Ibid*, p. 82.

on an interplay of understanding and imagination. It rises above the cognitive faculties and rests on a kind of metaphysical intuition in which the true and identical natures of the knower and the known are revealed. "This is indeed the divine manner of understanding in which the knower is the known. Hence the Scholastic and Indian definitions of perfect understanding as involving *adequatio rei et intellectus* or *tadākarata*.<sup>5</sup> This *tadākarata* is stressed by Tagore who holds that in aesthetic intuition we know but ourselves.<sup>6</sup>

Now this metaphysical intuition which is the condition for realisation of beauty can be had through a discipline similar to that of *Yoga*. *Yoga* speaks of stilling the mind and laying bare the soul-life, the spirit which is hidden in us under the feverish activity of our mind, that is, the sensitive and cognitive appetencies. Tagore speaks of this soul as something free of the burden of the mind. "It is alone, integrally perfect, carefree and effortless. Over its boundless blue forehead there is no mark of intelligence, there shines for ever the light of genius."<sup>7</sup> So the genius who visualises beauty in concrete forms is a *Yogi* in so far as he has to discipline his mind and capture his true soul-life. Tagore speaks of this matter thus : "I do not know details of *Yoga*, but we hear that the *Yogis* could create by *Yogic* powers. The creation by genius is of a similar kind. The poets, restraining their mind by virtue of their spontaneous power, and in a semi-conscious manner, somehow attract the ideas, feelings, sights, colours and sounds to their soul, and collecting them there, build out of them a coherent and lively whole."<sup>8</sup> The *Sukranītisāra* also asks the artist to have a contemplative vision ( *yoga-dhyāna* ) and not to have a direct observation of any form or figure. The Scholastic aesthetics also speaks of a contemplative primary act to be followed by a secondary act of setting down what has

5 Oomaraswamy : *Op cit* p. 158.

6 *Sahityer Pathe*, p. ( viii ).

7 *Panchabhut*, p. 114.

8 *Ibid*, p. 121.

been visualised in contemplation. In any case, Tagore conceives of beauty as an experience of a higher kind in which the mind with its perceptive and reasoning powers is subordinated to and controlled by the spirit which realises its kinship with outer objects. In the highest stage of *yoga-sādhana* the mind is completely stilled into a quiescent state, but in lower stages it is only controlled. Aesthetic contemplation requires one of these lower stages. The mind here is active but does not sway the spirit which remains self-composed and supreme. This is a condition of true joy according to Tagore.<sup>9</sup> And this aesthetic joy which ever accompanies beauty is far from pleasure we have in feelings and sensations. The latter is an ordinary reaction to objects of the world that satisfy some organic cravings while the former is an extra-ordinary attitude towards all objects seen in their truth and beauty. This extra-ordinary joy or beatitude distinguishes beauty from charm.

Tagore has amply explicated this distinction.<sup>10</sup> Like Keats he too had a conception of beauty that is not easy enough to please only by serving some organic interest but beauty that transcends and reconciles pleasure and pain, good and evil. This is the beauty of Moneta's face that Keats describes in his *Fall of Hyperion : a Dream*. This beauty is denied to one who does not "feel the giant agony of the world", and it is beauty that is truth. Keats, in search of true beauty, bids farewell to the simple joys of "flora and old Pan" and determines to "pass them for a nobler life" where he might find "the agonies, the strife of human hearts."<sup>11</sup> Tagore in the same search leaves a life of soft dalliance for one of suffering and sacrifice.<sup>12</sup> He boldly faced life with its pain and confusion in order to strike out a rich harmony that is beauty, he welcomes the terrible beauty of the month of *Vaisākh*.<sup>13</sup> He often quotes Keats' famous line "Beauty is truth,

9 *Ibid*, p. 82.

10 *Sahityer Pathe*, pp. 58-59.

11 *Sleep and Poetry*.

12 Poem in *Chitra*, এবার ফিরাও মোরে written in 1806 B. S.

13 Poem in *Kalpan*, বৈশাখ written in 1806 B. S.

truth beauty" and along with it the Upanishadic saying, "Whatever is dear to me I find in it my true self, that is why it is dear and beautiful."<sup>14</sup> Tagore held reality that is beauty to be a higher value than ordinary good and evil which after all concern our worldly interests. Therefore he sang, "Good and evil whatever comes, accept reality with easy grace," and wrote in separation from his dearest one, "Thou hast mixed the sweetness of death with my life."<sup>15</sup> This bold attitude towards death and disaster is born of the disciplining of the mind which shows things in their true light. Keats sought this state and in a moment of despair cried out, 'Oh, never will the prize of High reason, and the love of good and ill, Be my award.'<sup>16</sup> This high reason is a means to realisation of beauty that is truth.

This ascetic ideal of beauty solves one baffling problem in aesthetics which is the question how a tragedy can be beautiful and agreeable. Aristotle's cathartic theory, that pity and fear in us are expelled through excitation is unsatisfactory. So also is the theory of disinterested contemplation advanced in various forms by the majority of the aestheticians, e. g. Hegel, A. C. Bradley and Bosanquet. Disinterested contemplation is a contradiction in terms unless it is further explained from some deeper reality. Tagore's theory (which is essentially Vedantic) that the self in the aesthetic attitude is above the egotistic interests and distortions and communes with all objects in delight,— offers this needed explanation. Keats refers by implication to this transcendent self when he speaks of the poetic character as chameleon-like, one that has no identity, that "lives in gusto be it foul or fair, high or elevated..."<sup>17</sup> In fact Keats' famous concept of negative capability which he prizes as a positive virtue in a great artist is nothing but the capacity of the true self to assert itself over the individual ego. The true self

14 *Sahityer Pathe*, p. (v).

15 Poem in *Smarana*, *স্মরণ* written in 1809 B. S.

16 Verse. Letter to Reynolds, dated March 25, 1818.

17 Letter to Woodhouse, dated Oct 27, 1818.



delights in reality as it is irrespective of its particular value to the phenomenal self or ego ; so it is disinterested and its attitude towards everything is one of joy. In a tragedy the mind ( because it is not suppressed in the aesthetic attitude but only controlled ) feels the pity and terror depicted therein, but over and above the mind, and controlling it, is the self that contemplates these very mental affects with joy. Othello and Hamlet do not please us in the ordinary sense but they delight us extraordinarily because they represent truth which is beauty.<sup>18</sup> This is the metaphysical explanation of 'psychical distance'<sup>19</sup> involved in disinterested contemplation of art and delight in it.

We thus see that beauty is the prize of self-discipline and not of self-gratification. We may quote Tagore to substantiate this point. Says he :

So we arrive at this that ultimately beauty makes for discipline. And as Beauty thus softly leads us towards discipline, so does discipline, in turn, make us more deeply conscious of Beauty. We cannot taste of the honey at its core unless we poise ourselves into stillness before it. It is the chaste and devoted, not the light and flighty woman, who achieves true love. Chastity is the calmness of steadfast devotion that enables us to penetrate to the mystic depths of Beauty... That is why for the complete understanding of beauty, it is necessary to cultivate tranquillity, a state that is impossible for a distracted undisciplined mind to attain.<sup>20</sup>

Art demands tranquillity said Fra Angelico<sup>21</sup> and so says Indian aestheticians of the classical period for whom aesthetic joy is a kind of beatitude. It is called the twin of the flavour of Brahma ( *Brabmasvādasahodora* ). It is not strange, therefore, that aesthetic attitude should be one of tranquillity. Tagore quotes Upanishad to stress this point. "Only those of tranquil

18 *Sahityer Pathe*, p. 178.

19 Author's article : "Psychical Distance in Indian Aesthetics", *Journal of Aesthetics*, Dec. 1948.

20 *Sahitya*, p. 29. English version "Sense of Beauty" ( *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* May 1986).

21 Maritain, *Op. cit.* p. 55.

minds, and none else, can attain abiding joy, by realising within their souls the Being w'ho manifests one essence in a multiplicity of forms."<sup>22</sup>

But this beauty which is attained through self-discipline and which is identical with truth must be true goodness. Yet we have seen that beauty is beyond ordinary good and evil. The latter, like charms of the empirical world, are relative to the individual ego which is led by various interests and inclinations. In the aesthetic attitude the ego and the mind are transcended by the self which takes a view that is beyond ordinary morality and yet is moral in the highest sense. For here the self overcomes the interests of the ego and identifies itself with all that appears alien to the latter. In this attitude of self-abandonment and fraternisation consists absolute goodness.<sup>23</sup> So that beauty is true goodness for Tagore as it is for Plato, the Scholastics, Kant and many others.

So we see that for Tagore beauty is absolute goodness and truth to be realised not through our sensitive, affective and cognitive faculties, that is, through the mind. Rather, the mind is to be disciplined and subdued as is done in *yoga* and the spiritual self is to be realised and set over it. Beauty is essentially a spiritual experience ; though the mental activities are not stopped, they are thoroughly controlled and serve as accessories. For the control of mental activities to be possible and adequate, one has to undergo mental and spiritual discipline either deliberately and methodically through some psychical science ( such as *yoga* ) or naturally and semi-consciously as it usually happens through study, creative work or good living. In other words, self-control leading to self-knowledge and self-composure is needed for enjoyment of beauty. This is more or less an ascetic concept of beauty and this, we may be allowed to add, is the true concept whatever might the hedonists and the intellectualists say to the contrary.

<sup>22</sup> *Sadhana*, p. 86. ( 1919 )

<sup>23</sup> *Sahitya*, p. 87-88.



## REVIEWS OF BOOKS, BOOK NOTES

*The King and the Corpse* By Heinrich Zimmer. Ed. by Joseph Campbell.  
The Bollingen Series XI, Pantheon Books, Washington D. C.  
Price \$ 3. 75.

This is a posthumous publication of Dr. Zimmer's last work on ancient mythology and its significance for the modern man. It is a symposium of popular tales from Oriental and Occidental literature, from the Arabian Nights, from the Arthurian legends and from Hindu Puranas. Dr. Zimmer's approach to mythology is psychological. But he does not claim to have discovered any system whereby the ancient symbols can be made to reveal their significance. His mood or method is that of the dilettante, who yields to the delight of the tales he reads, allows himself to be overpowered by their fascination and is stirred to life by contact with the fascinating script of the old symbolic tales and figures. The result is no ready-made scheme of interpretation, no system of esoteric dogma, but a life-giving contact with the creative periods of human imagination. The depths of meaning in ancient symbols may never be sounded or exhausted ; but every sympathetic reader of these familiar tales in their new presentation will agree with the author that "a cupped handful of the fresh waters of life is sweeter than a whole reservoir of dogma, piped and guaranteed".

Without being dogmatic, Dr. Zimmer points out the significance for the modern man of many of the lessons, that can be read into the symbols of many an ancient tale. Thus, the delightful tale of *Abu Kasem's Slippers*—the slippers not changed when their time was out and thereby becoming incapable of being got rid of, returning to plague the owner time and again, giving rise to a chain of misfortunes which finally ruin him—is made to yield the significant lesson that man can only progress by continually shedding the successive personalities he builds up, the various stages of his development, when they have fulfilled their purposes in his career. Anything that we weave around us, pet ideas, attachments to possessions, positions or persons, can become Abu Kasem's slippers for us and ruin us if not discarded or transcended in time !

Two parallel tales, of *A Pagan Hero and a Christian Saint*, are shown to illustrate the profound teaching that evil cannot be avoided but has to be accepted and assimilated. "Self-dissolution, self-annihilation, before a

qualitative ( not quantitative ) superiority—a superiority that has been achieved through self-sacrifice, self-conquest and an effective integration—that is the only defeat there can be for the forces of evil”.

Other tales, like those of Shiva's superhuman love, bereavement and wrath, are left to make their own impression upon the reader with little or no attempt at interpretation. To those who yield themselves to the compelling power of these often bizarre representations, the myths of far off days can be “a mirror or fountain full of hints and prophecies, telling us what we are and how we should behave amidst the bewildering sequences of surprising events and happenings that are our common lot”.

S. K. George

*To the Students.* By M. K. GANDHI. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. xix + 324 pages. Rs. 3-8-0.

This is a compilation from the writings of Mahatma Gandhi directed to the students. It is not possible to overpraise this book—indeed, it is difficult to praise it enough. After a perusal, the first impulse is to recommend that selections from it be prescribed for the Matriculation and Intermediate classes, for these writings are pre-eminently suitable for the students and should be read by all of them. Everything said is intensely practical, fully reasoned out, and, though fraught with idealism, due to the Mahatma's inimitably sincere and homely style of writing, easily assimilable.

The pieces relate particularly to the problems of student life and questions that assail the student's mind. Properly read, these will have the wholesome effect of lessening the difficulties of the educationists and of saving the students from being playthings in the hands of designing pseudo politicians, for things that lead them astray have been dealt with, and arguments they proffer for their boisterous and otherwise questionable conduct answered, with considerable personal touch and sympathy.

So many men are found to take the name of the Mahatma in season and out of season. What should be done is to see that our youth understand him correctly. This has not been properly attempted yet.

J. C.

*Letters to My Son* by DAGOBERT D. RUNES. Philosophical Library, New York. \$ 2.75.

Dr. Runes is already known to the readers' world as a writer and compiler in the field of philosophical studies. The book under review shows another side of his personality, shows how sympathetically concerned he is for the 'undergraduate intelligence' of the world.

As the title indicates, the book consists of about twenty-five letters written by the author to his son. Without enquiring whether the letters were actually meant for any son, we are moved by filial piety towards the author as soon as we go into the contents of the book. The future of the world depends largely upon how the seeds of peace and amity are sown in the young minds of today and along what channels their emotions are guided. The author is fully aware of this. In one of the letters he addresses his son as "My Little Man", instead of 'my little child' as is often done. This alone clearly shows how he gives to the young their full worth, giving them a sense of prestige about their future responsibilities.

Much fraud has been practised throughout human history in the name of pet slogans like 'equality', 'democracy', and 'nationalism'. The younger generation must be acquainted with these and their limitations exposed. This seems to be the theme of many of the letters, the need of youth to outgrow all fraud, 'to rid oneself of all cant'.

The letters seek to divert the juvenile mind from externals and to focus it inwards. It is only in the inner regions of the self that the foundations of the real man can be laid. "There is no law worth obeying aside from the Law of the Heart", and "No answer can be given to the question : 'Who are the happy ?'. The answer must be found". Such are some of the deeper truths told through the letters. They go directly deep down to the heart of everyone who reads the book.

Chitta Ranjan Das.

*On Education.* By MULK RAJ ANAND. Hind Kitab Limited. 59 Pp.  
Rs. 1-8-0.

It is refreshing to come across a book giving independent and original thoughts, and not merely repetitions of ideas which enjoy popular fancy. It has been the fashion to quote a few set phrases in praise of Basic Education, and make use of the high respect in which the name of Mahatma Gandhi is held to stop all further thoughts on the subject. For the author, freedom is the goal of education. He is highly respectful to the Mahatma, but not afraid to differ with him in some particulars, and with strong reason too. His approach is the correct one, for it is from the point of view of the learner. The idea of a primary school he gives is well thought out.

He complains that education has not been taken up as seriously yet as it should be. The mention of forty years in the Sargent Scheme has caused some mischief, for forty years are forty years. It would damp the enthusiasm of a person if he has to believe that the thing for which he

labours may not be completed before his working years end. This may be one of the reasons why the work goes on in snail's pace, and at many places it has not been started yet. Since Governments also are subject to human frailties, herein lurks danger.

This is a small book of 59 pages,—unfortunately, not attractively produced,—but is full of excellent ideas. It should be read by everyone interested in education.

J. C.

*Young Teacher's Guide.* By THE REV. R. CONESA, S. J. Padma Publications Limited, Bombay. 53 Pp. Re. 1-0-0.

This is an excellent guide for the young teacher. There are in it a few things which may not be found in the ambitious text-books used in the Training Colleges. One is surprised to find that so much of useful matter could be packed within the span of this almost a pamphlet of 53 pages. The author says, "In my mind, teaching is not merely a lifework, a profession, an occupation, a struggle ; it is a passion." This is the spirit in which the book has been written.

A very good use of the book will be, apart from individual study by each teacher of a school, to read it together and then hold discussions. This will surely improve the tone of an institution. This is a small book, but can do a considerable amount of good.

J. C.

*Education for All Within Six Months.* By H. G. S. BIVAR. Rabindra Publishing House, Pataldanga Street, Calcutta. 41 Pp. Re. 1-0-0.

This is a sensational title for a book on education, but, then, it is on adult education.

It is not often recognised in practice, even by well-educated persons, that education is a science, and that it has its own technique. The belief that it can be imparted by anybody who has had a little of it is still very widely prevalent. When attempts at liquidation of adult illiteracy were first launched most of the people who took interest in this work thought that it was easy and that it could be done without any preparation and at no expense worth mention. Consequently, the results were disappointing and the work soon sagged. As no interest had been created, those who had been made literate reverted to illiteracy not long after they had been left to themselves. Mr. Bivar's book shows how much it has taken to develop the necessary technique and methods. Dr. Laubach's devotion to the cause leading to the "Key Word" method at once solves many of the problems

connected with the work. Mr Bivar says, "The scheme aims at making a class literate in six months. This not only can be done but it has been done."

It is interesting to recall that it was in solving some of the problems of adult teaching that the reading charts were invented as far back as in the year 1812, and afterwards these became recognised adjuncts to teaching in the initial stage in the schools for small children. Now Dr. Laubach gives us the "Key Word" method as the result of his endeavours in the adult education field. This method should have a great future.

One feels grateful to Dr. Laubach and Mr. Bivar for all they have done for the illiterate adults. If the suggestions and directions given in Mr. Bivar's book are adopted and proper literature is developed, lasting results will follow, as most of the pitfalls have been avoided and excellent directions have been given to help create and maintain interest in the minds of the learners.

J. C.

*The Indian Review Golden Jubilee Number.* Ed. Manian Natesan. G. A. Natesan & Co., 3 Sunkurra Street, G. T. Madras. Rs. 3-0-0.

Completion of fifty years of existence by any institution is an event of major importance in these rootless, tradition-less days. It is the more so when the institution happens to be a journal (which the *Indian Review* certainly is) in India where periodicals grow overnight to vanish the following day like mushrooms.

This monthly cyclopaedia modelled after the well-known *Review of Reviews*, has played a most worthy part during its long span of existence. Its founder-editor the late G. A. Natesan compares favourably with Ramananda Chatterji of revered memory. Both look to their journalistic career in the spirit of public servants and both gave a fillip to the national movement of India to the best of their abilities. It is such stalwarts who build up a tradition of serving the public cause with devotion and fairness. It is good that we have such periodicals as the *Modern Review* and *Indian Review* to remind us of the standard and example which their editors set for us.

The sumptuously produced special Golden Jubilee number lives up to expectations and is fully worthy of the happy occasion. Leading people in varied walks of life have sent to it messages of felicitation. There are special as well as general interest articles by reputed writers. The number is profusely illustrated with portraits of writers and leaders who have been



prominent in the public eye during the last fifty years. Beautifully printed on art paper, replete with such a rich and varied fare, this Special Number deserves to be widely read.

Banikanta

*Aesthetics*. Edited by MAHESH GUPTA. Youth's Art and Culture Circle, 172 Princess Street, Bombay. 46 pp.

The Youth's Art and Culture Circle, the publishers of this beautifully got-up Art Journal, was founded by a group of youngmen in Bombay, whose main aim is "to form a cultural and aesthetic back-ground for better understanding of life and its problems." No one can gainsay that the need exists now more than ever before for cultivating an interest in the study of Art and Literature among the younger generation. Knowledge in the sense of mere acquisition of information can be a dead weight and a burden unless there is the vitalising force of creative arts to train up the finer feelings and emotions in the youth of our country. We have been apt to consider the self-expressive arts as luxuries of a leisured existence with the result that as a nation we have become rather 'shabby' and 'shoddy'. It is time that we come to realise that in the most dynamic periods of our national history, India has been the most creative in her art, literature and philosophy.

We therefore unhesitatingly welcome the efforts that are being made by such bodies as the Y. A. C. C. to bring art closer to life and thus transform the pattern of our daily life in such a way as to secure aid and inspiration in our struggle for realisation of higher ideals.

*Aesthetics* is an annual feature : its first issue was brought out in 1944 and since then the Y. A. C. C. has been publishing it every year except for a brief spell when due to paper control its publication had to be suspended. The present issue is the third annual to be published and lives up to the claims made on its behalf by the publishers. Besides a number of illustrations by reputed artists, the Number is enriched by a group of extremely thought-provoking articles. There is a number of readable poems by Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Amiya Chakravarty, Premendra Mitra and Bishnu Dey. One of the outstanding contributions to the number is by Sachin Chaudhuri who discusses some of the fundamental problems facing the youth in India today in a short essay with the intriguing title *The Etiology of a Modern Malady*.

Banikanta

*Nritya* (in Bengali). By PRATIMA DEBI. Illustrations by Rabindranath Tagore. Visvabharati, 6/3 Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, Calcutt 7. Rs. 3-0-0.

Although it is difficult to compare our appreciation of the Fine Arts with that of others elsewhere, it is yet easy to conclude on absolute grounds of evidence that the expression of that appreciation in literary forms is poor in India. Those who have attended a *mushaira*, Kavi-sammelan, music or dance festivals of the primitive and the sophisticated must have noticed the communal intensity of enjoyment and heard many penetrating but casual comments by the audience on the performances. When, however, it comes to writing, clichés blunt the responses, or verbal virtuosity renders them imprecise. There is one point in favour of this deficiency, viz., the display of some respect, albeit unwitting, for the autonomy of each art within its own ambit. Where it is not deficiency but incompetence, then, apart from the personal factor, it originates from a social fact, viz., the disruption of communal life without being followed by the emergence of the individual, who alone can have that sharp, specific reaction which can lend itself to precise and concrete expression in the written word. In reality, the greater degree of communal dissolution in Bengal has been partly responsible for the greater amount of literary expression of the appreciation of Fine Arts there. Similarly for the act of enjoyment. In a *mushaira* of northern India the audience repeat the verses and loudly express themselves: the poet too recites the same line again and again. The ecstasy almost amounts to frenzy, and it is hard to resist the infection. Who could stand this in Bengal? The Bengali listens to poetry and music. His reactions appear to be less general. Yet they are not individualised the way, say of a Malraux or a Sackville West. They still remain tied to the stock ones. It appears that the logic of modes of expression is involved in the special nature of their origin and growth and depends upon the individual's precise and active participation for their development. Thus it is that the first duty of a critic of aesthetic forms lies in permitting the interplay of the social quality of communal enjoyment and the personal quality of his or her participation. Not an easy procedure in any art, and particularly in the matter of dance, and most so in the case where dance-forms mingle so completely with such special types of music and poetry as Tagore's.

So one feels very happy when a sincere attempt is made to expose the inter-relations of the different forms which determine the nature of intricate, delicate and integral pieces like *Chitrangada* and *Chandalika*. Sri Pratima Devi deserves the gratitude of all lovers of art for this well written booklet. Nothing better on the actual evolution of the dance-forms at Santiniketan

has been written. The process of gradual adaptation of Manipuri, South Indian, Javanese and a few European techniques in accordance with the needs of Tagore's music, rhythm, poetry and drama, and the reasons for the rejection of certain traits of the Kathak style of northern India, are cogently stated. She is intrinsically right on the issue that dancing should avoid sensuality, as is sought to be conveyed in movements of the neck and the hip. One still feels that she could make a concession for the eyes and the eyebrows, a full technique of which is to be found in the so-called spiritual, purely Hindu forms as well.

A few minor objections may be lodged to fulfil a reviewer's duties. The chapter on *nritya-rasa* is a compact re-statement of Tagore's view of Rhythm as the fundament of Art. Here joy of the artist is mentioned, but that fine frenzy which one actually feels in communal participation with the creative processes of performance is not fully conveyed. Some of the historical references made in this chapter are questioned by modern anthropologists. In any case, Ajanta and Konarak are not two thousand years old. A major criticism however, is the author's humility. Surely the world knows and if it does not it should, that since 1920 or thereabout Sri Pratima Devi has been responsible for the decor, if not the production of Tagore's dramas—and the production is the thing there. Others have helped her, but she has been the genius, because she is a genius in these lines. Such being the fact, the references to dress, lighting, background, stage craft etc. should have been more elaborate than what they are. This writer at least cannot imagine Tagore's dramas and dances without the silent, unobtrusive workmanship and the unerring aesthetic sense and the sure touch of *Bauthan*. She is an artist of a high order ; and she must come out more openly now, in these days of vulgarisation.

D. P. Mukerji.

*Guide-Book on Dancing.* By N. Lakshmanan. With a Foreword by K. Madhava Menon, Minister of Education, Government of Madras. Issued under the authority of the Director of Public Instruction, Madras. 1949. 48 pp. Re. 1-0-0.

Dancing has been introduced as an optional subject in secondary schools of Madras. The Minister for Education of the Provincial Government under whose auspices the present pamphlet has been issued, writes in his Foreword : "A time may even come when there will be demand to make it a subject of *compulsory* study". This is certainly a bold statement to make, but we could expect no less from a man in his position in South India which has been the home of Bharata Natya and Kathakali.

"A large part of man" Rabindranath Tagore says, "can never find its expression in the mere language of words. It must therefore seek for its other languages—lines and colours, sounds and *movements*." In his own institution at Santiniketan, therefore, he richly provided for the language of the personality 'which is the language of Art'. Thanks to the pioneer work of Rabindranath, dancing is now regarded as an essential part of our precious national heritage and an attempt is now being made to revive and popularize it both on the stage and in the schools.

A Guide-Book of this type answers a need of the hour, dealing as it does with the historical-cultural background of the ancient art of dancing and assessing, in that context, what place it should occupy in our cultural and educational life. The first part of the book is calculated to build up the right educational approach to dancing as an art and the second part is concerned mainly with the technical side i. e. methodology of dance-teaching. No better exponent of both these aspects could be found than the author who is himself Director of a Dance Academy associated with the name and memory of Tagore.

A book like this is found to advance the cause of Basic Education and Social Education in the scheme of which the self-expressive arts find an assured place.

Banikanta

*Language of Kathakali.* By PREM KUMAR. Kitabistan, Allahabad and Karachi. 1948. 102 pp. Rs. 6-0-0.

Melody consists of rhythmic intonation. Poetry is words wedded to rhythm. All the arts reveal this innate creative joy in rhythmic form. The art of Kathakali—well-known school of Dance Drama in South India—is rhythmic movement plus the language of gestures. This language as expressed through the gesture of hands and fingers, is known as *mudra* in Indian aesthetics. Quite early in the history of India one finds an attempt to develop and perfect this gesture language both for devotional and secular purposes.

The earliest reference to the use of *mudras* in the art of dancing is to be found in *Natyasastra* believed to have been composed in the early part of the Christian era. This proves that *mudras* had already been put to secular use in India more than two thousand years ago.

This ancient tradition of gesture language has been well-preserved in South India, particularly in Kathakali. The present writer has dealt only with this gesture-language as expressed through the art of Kathakali. In

his attempt at collecting authentic material, he has toured all over Travancore, Madras, Adyar and Santiniketan and learnt of well-known masters of the art.

The Introduction gives an informative description of the art of Kathakali in simple non-technical language which is likely to interest the general reader. There is also a brief discussion on the *mudras*. This is followed by a list of the main *mudras* numbering twentyfour together with illustrative sketches as well as pictures of ten different postures of the hand. Explanation is lacking of some of the illustrations given in pages 74-76. Pages 80-102 contain a list of the different expressions ( numbering five hundred and nine ) and describes how they have to be translated in the language of gestures. Preparation of such a comprehensive list must have entailed a good deal of labour for the author. His patient work of compilation will, we are sure, be well-repaid by the benefit accruing to all those who are interested in the subject.

It is well-known that divergent meanings and interpretations are often given to particular *mudras* by different exponents of the Kathakali. It would have been useful to the student had the author mentioned this, the more so because all the extant books on Kathakali give conflicting views in regard to the meaning of the different *mudras*. We may mention, in passing, that the list of mudras and supporting illustrations given in this book do not conform to the list and illustrations given in the brochures on the same subject published by the Governments of Travancore and Cochin. The '*Katakamukha*' mudra referred to by the author is not mentioned at all in those two books. Conversely, the author has not mentioned the '*Hastam*' mudra which the two books describe.

There are certain minor errors in the book, which, we hope, will be removed in the next printing. It is useless to compare the Dalangs of Java ( p. 17 ) with the background singers of the Kathakali. Mask has been described as an important item of Kathakali make-up ( p. 18 ). This is not true : masks are conspicuous by their absence from Kathakali make-up. The use of the adjective 'oriental' in the sentence 'Oriental dancing is characterised by the rich use it makes of mudras', is much too sweeping. There is also a case of self-contradiction in p. 19. where the author pleads for minor adjustments being made to fit in Kathakali to suit modern taste. This does not go well together with the rather stringent criticism made in p. 15 against contemporary producers and exponents of the art of Kathakali.

Apart from these minor defects this book serves a really useful purpose and is a welcome addition to the rather meagre literature on Indian Dancing.

No wonder that it has been blessed by Srimati Ruxmini Devi and Gopinath—both of whom are distinguished votaries of the art of dancing.

The printing and get-up of the book are up to the mark. One only wishes that it could be made available to people of humbler purses—six rupees is too big a price even for this well-illustrated and well-documented book.

Santideva.

*Deshe Bideshe* ( in Bengali ). By Syed Mujtaba Ali. New Age Publishers Limited, Calcutta. Rs. 5-0-0.

Really good travel books were considered a rarity in Bengali literature till the other day. Compared to Anglo-American output in this field, travel literature in Bengali was conspicuous by its meagreness both in quality and quantity. One of the main reasons why this was so, was perhaps that there was but limited scope in the routine-bound narrow ambit of the average Bengali life to taste of the adventures of exotic experience. Probably, as in many other fields, it remained with Rabindranath Tagore, with his amplitude of mind and experience, to rescue travel literature from its obscure domain and give it a distinctive status in the history of Bengali letters.

It is a matter of some gratification that certain younger writers have followed in Tagore's footsteps and produced eminently readable travel books—works that can easily lay claim to world class. One such book is Syed Mujtaba Ali's *Deshe Bideshe* ( At Home and Abroad ).

*Deshe Bideshe* cannot be regarded as travel literature in the conventional sense; the travel part of the book is dominated by a keen desire to know and understand a neighbouring country. Seen from that angle the title of the book is slightly misleading, because it is more of a story of a particular country and an account of two eventful years of its history—than an account of his travels at home and abroad. The theme starts with the author boarding the train in Calcutta and then leads us on to Kabul via Peshwar and Jalalabad in his highly engaging company. The story of his two years' stay in the capital of Afghanistan is replete with facts and anecdotes about the state of affairs in that country previous to the coup-d'etat of Baccha-i-Saquo and the period immediately after. There is a dramatic quality in the planning of the whole book with action, dialogue and characters thrown in with the 'crisis' developing towards the end prior to the author's emplaning for India and safety. This and the scintillating style of the author does not permit interest to flag at any point. We seem to

touch the author's mind at as many points as his personality has facets. A person of culture and immaculate taste Syed Mujtaba Ali is almost feminine in his sensibility and instinctive reaction to things and events. What wealth of details, what voracity for gossip and small talk, and above all, what a 'chatty' way of putting things both serious and flippant ! A well-read man in the realm of languages and literature, philosophy and history, his learning sits lightly on the author's shoulders. He has assimilated it all and he draws upon his apparently inexhaustive fund of knowledge and information with liberal abandon.

The nimbleness of his mental make-up and its chameleon-like quality is reflected most in the way he handles his language. The adage—style is the man—fits him like a cap. The turns of phrases and expressions, the subtle nuances of suggestiveness, the colloquial intimacy and the bubbling fun of polyglot versatility—appear to be the characteristics of this serio-comic and facile personality. He has played up to his Bengali and kidnapped this rather young daughter of classical Sanskrit to dare out in the open. The loan-words that he has used are a definite contribution to and an enrichment of a stratum of the language of this alluvial land fed by the Ganges of Bharat and the Padma of Pakistan. It is in this stratum that Bengali may one day become as fertile and creative as both Bengals would like her to be, and, it is here perhaps that our cultural homogeneity might become most evident some day.

Banikanta

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- The Vision of India.* By SISIR KUMAR MITRA. Jaico Publishing House, 125 Bell Lane, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Bombay. xv + 336 pp. Rs. 1-8-0.
- Upanishads in Story and Dialogue.* By R. R. DIWAKAR. Foreword by S. Radhakrishnan, Illustrated by Madhukar Sheth. Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261-263 Hornby Road, Bombay. v + 130 pp. Rs. 2-8-0.
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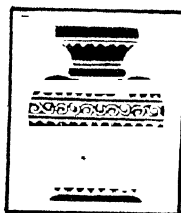
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